
$3.95/$5.50 Canada
September, 1994
image
ILLUSTRATED
FROM THE EDITORS OF
HERO
ILLUSTRATED



LIEFELD
PACELLA
MIKI

DOOM'S IV





THE
DOOM
CONTINUES
IN JULY!



DOOM'S IV™ is copyright© and trademark Rob Liefeld 1994

HERO SPECIAL EDITION CONTENTS







HERO EXTRA:

82 J. SCOTT CAMPBELL
83 ANDY MANGELS
90 ANIMAGIMATION
92 IMAGE STUFF
95 PRICE GUIDE
IMAGE POSTER: MATSUDA & MIKI

WARNING: The opinions expressed in this issue do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher.

HERO SPECIAL EDITION FEATURES:

9 THE IMAGE STORY
Jim Valentino sets the record straight about the birth of Image Comics, and *HERO* sets the record straight on the sometimes confusing makeup of the company.

12 HEROES AND VILLAINS
As Image characters infiltrate mainstream society, *HERO* gives the rundown on the heroes we love, the villains we love to hate, and where they surfaced.

22 THE FOUNDERS' CLUB
In-depth, no-holds-barred interviews with the six biggest names in comics: Liefeld, Valentino, McFarlane, Larsen, Lee, and Silvestri. Read with caution!

58 WETWORKING WHILCE
Whilce Portacio is back in the saddle after a long anticipated return with *Wetworks*. *HERO* picks his brain to find out what to expect next from the Whilcester.

64 THE PITT CRUE
One of Image's top books and most popular guest stars, where will Pitt pop up next? Would you believe Monster of Rock? It could happen.

68 AL GORDON'S WILDSTAR
Al Gordon talks about coming to Image, the narrative problems with time travel, and his *Wildstar* rising.

70 JAE LEE: A SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM
Is the world ready for *Hellshock*? Maybe not, but Jae Lee was ready for us; read about moving to the independents and his new series.

74 THE BLACK & WHITE HACK SHACK
Art Thibert talks about his new book, *Black & White*, how he wound up at Image, and what a long strange trip it's been.

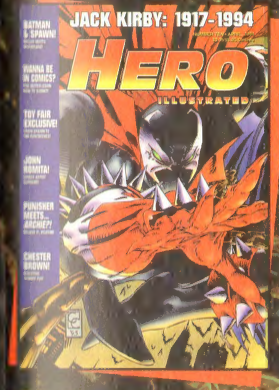
78 A GOOD OLE CHAP
Chap Yaep talks about how he made a break in the industry for himself, and working on *Team Youngblood*.

80 LOCAL BOY MAKES GOOD
From fanzine contest winner to hot young artist at Extreme Studios, Todd Nauck explains what it's like to have a dream come true.

84 THE BEANS ARE BACK!
Larry Marder, champion of creators' rights, brainchild of *The Beanworld*, and executive director of Image on cleaning up images and a resurgence of beans.

88 SOLID PLATT-INUM
Steve Platt on *Moon Knight*, on what it means to be a "hot" artist, and the past, present, and future of *Prophet*.

THE BEST COMIC MAG JUST GOT BETTER!!!



HERO ILLUSTRATED

YOU DEMANDED IT! YOU GOT IT!

Now you can receive the hottest new comics magazine at your front door! If you want the latest info on all the hot comics, artists, writers, insider news, trading cards, movies, action figures, and the best price guide in comics, then HERO is the magazine for you! Plus:

- Original full-size comics, like *Bone* and *Extreme!*
- Incredible contests like our Exclusive Scratch-Off Cards that could net you tons of valuable prizes!
- Groundbreaking premiums that set HERO apart from the rest of the pack!

Finally a way to catch the exclusive reviews, pictures and previews of upcoming comics each and every month. Don't miss a single issue, because if you didn't read it in HERO ILLUSTRATED—you didn't read it at all!



HAVE HERO ILLUSTRATED COME RIGHT TO YOUR DOOR!

Get 12 issues of HERO for only $24.95! Send payment to:
HERO ILLUSTRATED, P.O. Box 1613, Lombard, IL 60148-8613

Name

Address

City State ZIP

❑ Payment Enclosed ❑ Bill Me
Credit Card Orders: ❑ VISA ❑ MC

Card No. Exp. Date

Signature

For Faster Service, Call:
708-268-2498

Make check or money order payable to Warrior Publishing, Inc. Canada and Mexico add $10.00. All foreign subscriptions via airmail only $100.00. Any/all checks or money orders must be payable in U.S. funds, and must be drawn on an American bank. (American Express money order, Citibank money order, or any other type of check or money order that would go through a U.S. branch bank.) All foreign orders must be prepaid. Please allow 6-8 weeks for your first issue.

HHSH1

IMAGE ROCKS!



WITH BADROCK! AND COMPANY!

FEATURING AWESOME ART FROM THE EXTREME TALENT SEARCH DISCOVERY:

TODD NAUCK!!

YOU LL ALSO FIND WRITERS GALORE:

KIETH GIFFEN!
ANDY MANGELS!
TOM AND MARY BIERBAUM!

32 PAGES
$2.50

FEATURING GUEST STARS GALORE!

PITT™

STORMWATCH™

FREAK FORCE™

WILDCATS™
COVERT ACTION TEAM

AND MANY, MANY MORE!

BADROCK™ is trademark and copyright© 1994

Living in the Image Age of Comic Books?

Some say Image Comics has single-handedly killed the comic book market—a hefty chore for one small company, and probably not very accurate. Others say Image Comics has revolutionized the art form, at least in terms of superhero comics, which have traditionally been dominated by Marvel and DC. That, too, is a lofty claim, but as history plays itself out, it is probably right on the money. To the naked eye, Image may not look much different than the grandfathers of the superpowered—all of them have lines of toys, animated series, and some truly kick-butt comic books.

So what's the big deal?

Philosophy.

At Image, as the saying goes, to the victors go the spoils, and the victors are the idea men—not conglomerate CEOs and shareholders who more than likely spend more time with the *Wall Street Journal* than reading what have, over the years, become their own comic books and characters, or rather, products and intellectual properties.

Image exists because the men who run it care. They care about the art form, about the hobby, about the fans, and most importantly, about their own futures and the futures of their families. They have had the guts to take control of their own destinies and they are succeeding—and whether you love 'em or hate 'em, Image Comics cannot be ignored. Nor can the snowball of creators' rights that they have rolled down the mountain.

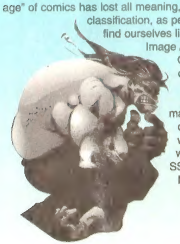
Their philosophy is really pretty simple, and it's a shame nobody thought of it sooner—give credit where credit is due. When you create something, it's yours to do with as you wish. It's like living in an apartment versus owning a house. If you own your house and decide to paint your walls fuchsia and glue cotton balls to them, that's your business. If you're renting an apartment at the time, you better look into buying a house–real quick.

As far as Image hurting the hobby?

Hogwash.

Change is inevitable, and you either adapt or go the way of video Pong. The strong may survive, but in business, only the smart become strong, and as Image succeeds, more and more of the most talented veterans and brightest young stars are moving to the creator-owned arena.

As the millennium moves forward and what is now called the "modern age" of comics has lost all meaning, and we search for some sort of a classification, as people are prone to do, we may even find ourselves living in the midst of, dare I say, the Image Age of comics.



Of course, like Garth Algar, some cynics fear change. So what if Image had existed 50 years ago? There would probably still be two major companies, with young pups constantly nipping at their heals, but with one difference. The two biggies would probably be named Kirby and SSx.

Nice ring to them, huh?

-Mike Stokes
Editor

HERO SPECIAL EDITION™

SEPTEMBER, 1994
Volume 7, Number 1
A WARRIOR PUBLICATIONS, INC. PERIODICAL

PUBLISHER
Steve Harris
ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
Marc Camron
EDITOR
Mike Stokes
ASSISTANT EDITOR
Joe Fielder
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
John Benton, Steve Spaulding
ART DIRECTION
Jim Cordano, Joe Darrow,
Juli McMeekin, Mike Reisel

PRODUCTION
Colleen Bastien, **Production Manager**
Dave McCracken, **Production Assistant**
Jennifer Whitesides, **Managing Copy Editor**
Gayle Schneider, Jo-El M. Damen,
Mary Hatch, **Copy Editors**
John Born, **Ad Coordinator**

SENDAI MEDIA GROUP™
Steve Harris, President
Mike Riley, Vice President of Operations
Mark Mann, Chief Financial Officer
Mark Kaminky, Vice President/General Counsel
Dave Marshall, Circulation Manager
Cindy Kerr, Director of Promotions
Kim Koval, Promotions Coordinator
Ron Pringle, Promotions Art Director
Kate Rogers, Publicity Manager
Harvey Wasserman, Newsstand Director
Peter Walsh, Newsstand Manager
John Stanford, Manufacturing Director
Ken Williams, Systems Coordinator

ADVERTISING
Eisenberg Communications Group, Inc.
(310) 824-5297
Jon Yoffie, National Advertising Manager
Karen Landon, Account Executive
Suzanne Farrell, Ad Coordination Manager
Elaine Zimmerman, Advertising Coordinator

DISTRIBUTED BY:
WARNER PUBLISHING SERVICES, INC. AND SENDAI DIRECT DISTRIBUTION.

HERO SPECIAL (ISSN #1071-4944) is published monthly by Warrior Publications, 1600 Highland Ave. Suite 202, Lombard, IL 60148. Third class postage paid Plattsburg, NY. Single issue rates: $3.95. POSTMASTER: For subscription changes, change of address, or write to: *HERO* SPECIAL P.O. Box **1613, Lombard, IL 60148-8413.** The editors and publisher are not responsible for unsolicited materials. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the expressed written permission of Warrior Publications, Inc. Copyright © 1994. Warrior Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. All materials listed in this magazine are subject to manufacturers change and the publisher assumes no responsibility for such changes. All books, covers, images, characters and likenesses thereof presented in this magazine are the individual property, trademarks and copyrights of their creators and/or companies. All copyrights and trademarks are the property of the companies.
Printed in CANADA.
HERO SPECIAL EDITION is a trademark of Warrior Publications, Inc. Sendai Media Group is a trademark of Sendai Publishing Group, Inc.

BY JIM VALENTINO

THE IMAGE STORY

It all started with Rob Liefeld. In August of 1990 at the San Diego Comicon, we were working for Marvel and a whole group of people, about 30 altogether, went out to dinner one night. The group split up and the smaller group went off to a Mexican restaurant that was across the street from the convention center. In that group was Rob, Eric Larsen, me, my wife Diane, David Albrecht, Sven Larsen, and a couple other people. Eric, Rob, Diane, myself, and Dave Albrecht were all sitting in a kind of cluster. Rob and Dave were in rare form that night and everybody was just goofing and having a good time. Rob asked Dave if he would publish a book by him, and Dave started laughing uproariously and said, 'Yeah. Of course. Sure. I'd love to.' And Rob said, 'How about Jim and Eric. Would you publish a book by them?' And he said, 'Yeah, anything you guys want to do, just let us know. We'd love to do something with you.' It was more or less taken as a joke. But that's not what happened. Rob thought about it, and he had wanted to do a book from start to finish for a long time–just to see the whole thing through. And since I had done that before, he grilled both Diane and I [about] how you go about it, how do you go about that whole entire process. And it kept coming up over the course of the whole next year. While we were all really busy between that year, 1990 to '91 (everybody who was later involved with Image was incredibly busy), Rob kept on talking to the three people who he was closest to in the whole industry, which was myself, Todd McFarlane, and Eric Larsen.

In early September of 1991, a year after the San Diego Comicon which all of us were pretty much disgruntled with Marvel at that particular point, because they were kind of stand-offish in the August 1991 convention. In early September, there was an ad that appeared in CBG and a few other places from 'Image Comics,' and it was for a book called *The Executioners* that Rob was going to do. He copped the name [Image] from a TV commercial that was out there at the time–some guy with long blond hair that was a tennis star, and he said 'Image is everything' at the end of the commercial. And that's where Rob got the name from. If you look in back issues of CBG, you'll see that ad.

On Sept. 13, 1991, Marvel threatened to fire Rob over *The Executioners*. If he didn't pull it, they were going to fire him. And he got livid. It was pretty much right then that Image was born. Now, the very first person to sign on with him was Eric Larsen. I was vacillating because I have a large family and my book wasn't a multi-million selling book, and I didn't have a lot of money ... and it was a ballsy step. At that point, Todd had pretty much retired. He had left *Spider-Man* awhile before this and he wasn't really sure if he was going to do comics or not. So he was thinking about it. By December of 1991, Todd had decided that he was going to do it.

A week before Christmas was the Sothbey's auction at New York, and Todd and Rob went there. Rob had firm confirmation from both Eric and I that we were in, so now it was the four of us. When they got to New York, they told Jim Lee and Marc Silvestri what was going on, and they both joined in. Rob gave me a call from New York and was incredibly excited. He said, 'We just got Jim Lee and Marc Silvestri! Aw geesh, wow.' And it was just like the most incredible thing that he could say. And the next day, I believe it was, they were going in for the infamous meeting with Terry Stewart. And it was the big three—Todd, Rob, and Jim.

Basically, Terry offered them the Epic imprint, but Todd, in his usual eloquent way, told him he didn't *need* the Epic imprint. They were going to do something quite different. And I should state here that the only reason Jim and Marc weren't included here before was that, although all of us had met Jim and Marc on several occasions and admired their work greatly and found them to be really great guys, we didn't really know them that well. And for the whole entire year, this had been very, very hush-hush, because we realized how dangerous this could really be. But once they did come on board, everybody was just like, '*Wow!* It was a moment of pure elation. That was it. That was really just what turned this into a hurricane.

January 7, I called up Roz Kirby, because Todd wanted to put 'Jack Kirby Presents' on the books. So I called up Roz Kirby and told her what we were doing. Although I didn't approach her with that, because I thought it too presumptuous for a first phone call, I was just sort of uncomfortable with it. I asked if we could have Jack's blessing on this, and she was very, very ecstatic about this and gave us, 'Please boys, God bless you. Go ahead. Give 'em hell. Do what you've gotta do.' She was wonderful. It really gave us all a big confidence boost. On January 23, 1992, Malibu released the announcement about the formation of Image.

On February 1, we had our first meeting at Marc Silvestri's house. This was the first time all six partners were together in one room. Whilce was in the Philippines and didn't really know about the formation of Image. It was the six of us there. In late February, there was a book announced called *Extreme: The Art of Rob Liefeld*. Both Marvel and DC refused to allow the reprinting of any material in this book, even though the precedent had been set with books by Neal Adams and George Perez and John Byrne.

On March 13, the first Image publication came out, and that was two ashcans that printed either story from *Youngblood* #1. And that was released at a New York appearance by Rob, and right around the same time, there was a poster put out with a Malibu logo on it. It didn't have the Image logo on it. And then on April 16, *Youngblood* #1 was released.

And that's the real chronology. ▲

THE IMAGE NETWORK

JIM VALENTINO
SHADOWLINE





JIM LEE
HOMAGE
WILDSTORM
AEGIS

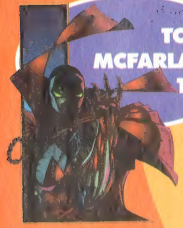
IMAGE COMICS



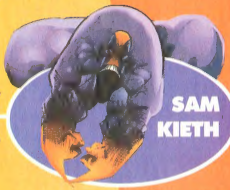
DALE KEOWN
FULL BLEED

MARC SILVESTRI
TOP COW





TODD
MCFARLANE
TMP



SAM
KIETH



ROB LIEFELD
EXTREME



AL
GORDON
HOT LED INK



ERIK
LARSEN



SERGIO
ARAGONES

YOUNGBLOOD

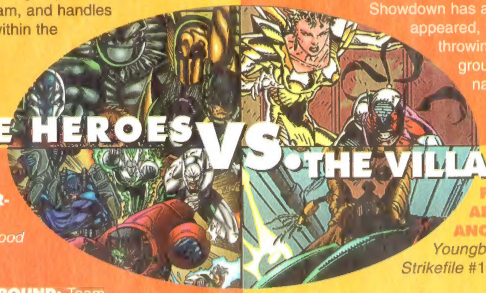
FIRST APPEARANCE: *Youngblood* #1

BACKGROUND: Youngblood acts as an organization of superheroes working for the government. More than just simple government agents, Youngblood are also treated as celebrities by most civillians. Members of Youngblood must carry the additional worry of public perception outside their normal stress-filled lives. The core Youngblood team consists of Shaft (the leader), Troll, Badrock, Die Hard, Vogue and the latest member Knight Sabre. This group is considered the home team, and handles threats within the nation's borders.

THE FOUR

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Youngblood* #1

BACKGROUND: The Four are a group of villains consisting of Strongarm, Gage, Deadlock, and Starbright. Long-time nemesises of Youngblood, The Four are constantly reappearing as a thorn in their collective side. Gage was recently captured in an attempt to free Strongarm from imprisonment. As the group went to teleport, Chapel knocked Gage out of the area of the transport field. The rest of the team currently remains at large. A mysterious fifth member named Showdown has also appeared, thus throwing off the group's name.



THE HEROES VS. THE VILLAINS

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Youngblood* #1

BACKGROUND: Team Youngblood share the exact same responsibilities that the core Youngblood team does, except their focus is on threats outside the country. This border difference is also known to extend to the upper atmosphere, as the away team followed the evil cyborg Giger into space to stop him. The away team is comprised of Masada, Sentinel, Dutch, Photon, Cougar, Riptide, and Diehard.

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Youngblood Strikefile* #1

BACKGROUND: Giger is a name known to go back far into the mysterious past of Team Youngblood member Dutch ... though little has been revealed save for that the two went separate ways at one point. Later, the entire world watched when Giger and Cyberdata staged an armed takeover of the Liberty Space Station, and Team Youngblood was sent to free the base. In the battle, Giger was apparently destroyed, but there are suspicions that he may return in the near future.

TEAM YOUNGBLOOD

GEIGER

SPAWN

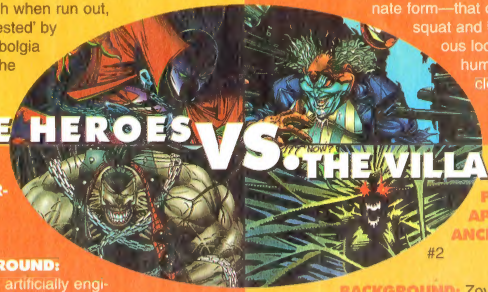
FIRST APPEARANCE: *Spawn* #1

BACKGROUND: Al Simmons was a man who loved his wife so much that, when he died, he sold his soul to a powerful demon, the Malebolgia, in order to return to Earth. However, when he returned, several years had passed and his wife had remarried. To add insult to injury, Al found himself in the rotten body of another man. Al soon learned that the demon had made him into a Hellspawn, a potential lieutenant in the army of hell. Al was given a set amount of powers, which when run out, will be 'tested' by the Malebolgia to see if he passes.

THE VIOLATOR

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Spawn* #2

BACKGROUND: The Violator is somewhat different than the average supervillain—in fact *he's a demon from hell*. The archdemon Malebolgia sent him to Earth in order to provoke Spawn into using his powers. He attempted to draw Spawn into direct confrontation with New York's police force and the mob by going on a heart-wrenching rampage. Instead, crime actually went down in the city. The Malebolgia punished The Violator for his failure by trapping him in his alternate form—that of a squat and lecherous looking human clown.



THE HEROES VS. THE VILLAINS

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Pitt* #1

BACKGROUND: Pitt is an artificially engineered killing machine built by the being Zoyvod to be the perfect soldier. Pitt has the ability to lock onto the aggression of his foes, thus annihilating anything in his path. Once acting as Zoyvod's killing machine, Pitt found freedom when the entity Chereb showed him a better life. While he works for good now, Pitt carries a lot of blood on his hands from his past life under Zoyvod's control. Currently, Pitt resides on Earth where he guards the "Child of Light"—the melded combo of Chereb and the earthling child, Timmy.

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Pitt* #2

BACKGROUND: Zoyvod is the evil master of the Creed, a vast interplanetary empire. Zoyvod is a being of pure evil that feeds on the fear of his victims. As one of the donors of Pitt's DNA, Zoyvod is a "father" of sorts to Pitt. When Zoyvod's soldiers crushed the Chakra rebellion, one rebel Chereb escaped—with his consciousness melded to Pitt's, they escaped to Earth to find the boy Timmy. Zoyvod followed the two there himself—only to be blasted to near oblivion by the combined power of the Seer and young Timmy.

PITT

ZOYVOD

CYBERFORCE

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Cyberforce* #1

BACKGROUND: Cyberforce had its beginnings in the corrupt techno-group Cyberdata. Cyberdata collects those already born with mutant powers, so that they can upgrade them with cybernetic enhancements and convert them into their pets soldiers, the Shocs. One of these soldiers, John Stryker, discovered that Cyberdata brainwashed their operatives into serving them with microcircuitry implants placed into their skulls. After freeing several agents, Stryker formed Cyberforce to put a stop to Cyberdata's manipulation.

SHOCS

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Cyberforce* #1

BACKGROUND: The Shocs (Special Hazardous Operation Cyborgs) are the agents of Cyberdata that remained after Stryker escaped. Given "brain boxes," these agents are transformed into near-perfect killers as the boxes make them crazed and totally lethal. The Shocs and Cyberforce have clashed quite a few times, as Cyberforce makes it a habit of foiling Shoc operations. Their most recent battle stemmed from the Shocs' attempting to kidnap the mutant Velocity. Cyberforce rescued Velocity, and she later joined the team.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Codename: Strykeforce* #1

BACKGROUND: What does the four-armed mutant John Stryker do in his spare time? Well, to relax John does free-lance mercenary work with another team of his devise. The basic Strykeforce team is comprised of Stryker, Bloodbow, Anvil, Kill Razor, and Tempest. Strykeforce's early jobs included simple bodyguard work, rescuing heads of state from terrorists, and clearing the Stormwatch satellite from ... an organic compromise.

CODENAME: STRYKEFORCE

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Codename: Strykeforce* #1

BACKGROUND: During a bodyguard job for Strykeforce where Stryker's team protected the President of the United States from harm, Death's Angel's force snuck in and kidnapped several leaders of foreign countries. In his escape, Death's Angel sunk two NATO warships with his monster-sized nuclear sub. After meeting up with Stryker, the sub later ended up in the hands of Strykeforce.

DEATH'S ANGEL

WILDC.A.T.S

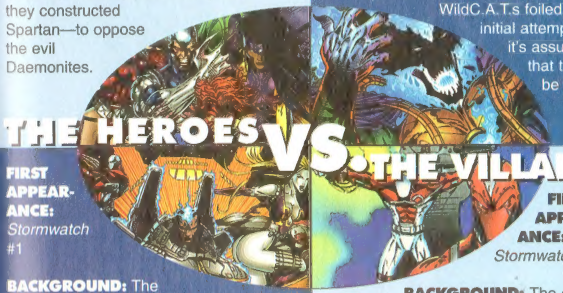
FIRST APPEARANCE: *WildC.A.T.s* #1

BACKGROUND: WildC.A.T.s (Covert Actions Groups) came together under the leadership of Jacob Marlowe. Jacob was a bum until the day he met Void, a super-powered being who convinced him of his greater destiny and guided him to become a billionaire virtually overnight. Marlowe, as Void told him, is one of the Kheribum, a powerful being from another place who came to Earth long ago. Jacob gathered the WildC.A.T.s team—Voodoo, Warblade, and Maul, and they constructed Spartan—to oppose the evil Daemonites.

DAEMONITES

FIRST APPEARANCE: *WildC.A.T.s* #1

BACKGROUND: The Daemonites are the near opposites of Marlowe's race the Kheribum, and by that, the two groups are bitter enemies. Daemonites' true appearance is that of a hulking eight foot creature with obvious evil intentions. However, Daemonites carry the ability to "possess" other beings, controlling their host and fitting their considerable frames inside them. Thus the Daemonites were able to place their number among key figures in the government. The WildC.A.T.s foiled their initial attempt, but it's assured that they'll be back.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Stormwatch* #1

BACKGROUND: The Stormwatch program began on the fateful day when a mysterious comet caught the United Nations' first orbital space station in its tail. Thousands died a horrible death from the radiation, and those who survived ... changed. These creatures became the powerful but uncontrollable Warguard, who were put into stasis as the last defense of Earth against attack. The gifted progeny of the Warguard were used to create the global peacekeeping force called the Stormwatch, which operates to this day.

STORMWATCH

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Stormwatch* #1

BACKGROUND: The original Stormwatch team was abandoned unknowingly during a Kuwait operation by Battalion, who believed them dead. Deathtrap, the leader of the mercenaries, actually had the three brought back to his base of operations in the seedy nation state of Gammora. He kept this knowledge quiet, draining their energies until he was set to reveal it. Surprisingly enough, Battalion disobeyed a direct order and rescued his old team upon learning that they were still alive. And he violated Gammora's borders to do it.

MERCENARIES

SHADOWHAWK

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Youngblood* #2

BACKGROUND: Paul Jonstone was forcibly injected with a syringe full of HIV positive blood as punishment for wronging a group of criminals. On his way home from learning of his condition, several hoods jumped Jonstone and left him in agony on the street. These two events led Jonstone down a dangerous path. With martial arts training and an armored costume, Jonstone began a quest as the vigilante ShadowHawk, preying on those who prey on innocents and gave them a lesson ... not by killing them, but by breaking their spines.

REGULATORS

FIRST APPEARANCE: *ShadowHawk* Volume 2 #1

BACKGROUND: The Regulators are a group of borderline villains—too self-centered to be called heroes, too generous to be called evil. Their main reason for existing is to make money through extortion for their leader Vendetta or through simple theft. The members of the group are: BlakJak—a failed Youngblood subject, Arson—a pyrokinetic arsonist, Vortex—a woman who controls high speed winds, and Hardedge—a Cajun with force field powers. The Regulators sometimes work with ShadowHawk, sometimes against him.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Youngblood* #3

BACKGROUND: He's the Image Universe's most powerful hero, and he's got an ego just as big. Supreme was one of the original heroes fighting in WWII, and while teaming with other heroes such as Glory and Super Patriot, almost singlehandedly beat the Nazis. After the war, Supreme left the planet for space. Upon his return 50 years later, he found the world had changed radically and was very displeased. Recently, Supreme lost his powers in a battle with Quantum, and is now getting by by using Thor's Hammer.

SUPREME

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Supreme* #2

BACKGROUND: Zachariah Grizlock is Supreme's original and greatest nemesis. While Supreme spent time away from Earth, Grizlock went out and systematically murdered every single one of Supreme's friends, lovers, and acquaintances. Grizlock recently bought his life from Supreme by offering to bring his powers back. Instead, in a ploy to separate him from Thor's Hammer, he accidentally rendered him insane.

ZACHARIAH GRIZLOCK

SAVAGE DRAGON

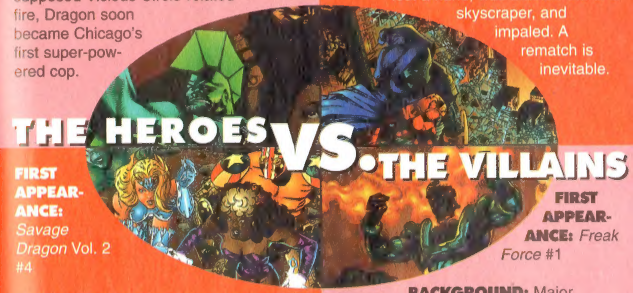
FIRST APPEARANCE: *Savage Dragon* Vol. 1 #1

BACKGROUND: A victim of amnesia, The Dragon found himself green, super-strong, with a large fin on his head, and with no recollection at all of his earlier existence. Lt. Frank Darling pleaded with him to join the police force, but he was more interested in a quiet life. But after a friend who was putting him up died in a supposed Vicious Circle-related fire, Dragon soon became Chicago's first super-powered cop.

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Savage Dragon* Vol. 1 #1

BACKGROUND: The Vicious Circle is a super-powered criminal syndicate that terrorizes and carries out extortion throughout the city of Chicago. The Vicious Circle's leader, Overlord, is an immensely powered being who has his peons carry out his actions for him. In the first battle with Overlord, The Dragon lost a hand, was blasted out of a skyscraper, and impaled. A rematch is inevitable.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Savage Dragon* Vol. 2 #4

BACKGROUND: The Freak Force began as a special super-powered unit of the Chicago police force under The Dragon. Eventually, however, the rules of the force became too much for the group and they declared themselves independent. Now to fund their operations, The Freak Force hunts down villains that have outstanding bounties. The team is made up of: Barbaric, Horridus, Super-Patriot, Mighty Man, Rapture, and Dart.

FREAK FORCE

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Freak Force* #1

BACKGROUND: Major Disaster is an Eco-Terrorist that can manipulate pollutants to form just about anything. Major Disaster is known to destroy anything he considers a threat to the environment, such as the major chemical and oil companies. His lack of concern for the human lives lost in his rampages clearly classifies him as a villain. The Freedom Force collected enough on his bounty to start their act.

MAJOR DISASTER

THE MAXX

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Darker Image* #1

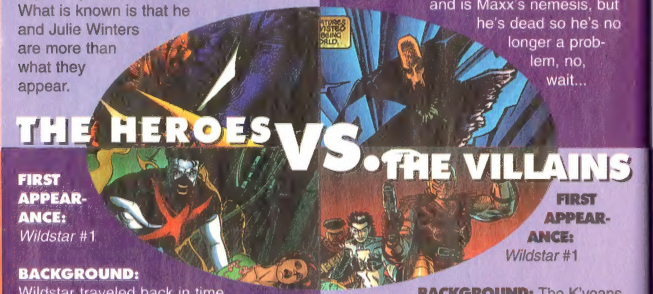
BACKGROUND: Who The Maxx is is a riddle. He's a bum who sleeps in trash bins. He's a hero. He's the spirit animal and protector of Julie Winters (no relation to Edgar Winter). He's a rabbit. He lives in the Image Universe. He lives in the outback known as Pangaea. Sometimes when he thinks, he finds he's spoken out loud.

Whatever The Maxx is is unclear. Not much of what he says makes sense—especially when he tells stories. What is known is that he and Julie Winters are more than what they appear.

ISZES & MR. GONE

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Darker Image* #1

BACKGROUND: The Iszes are creatures from The Maxx's 'other place,' Pangaea. The White Iszes are pretty stupid, and the Black Iszes are only marginally more intelligent and *mean*. When brought over to the normal world, the Iszes are seen as policemen, little old ladies, or whatever—and short whatevers at that. Mr. Gone controls the Iszes and is Maxx's nemesis, but he's dead so he's no longer a problem, no, wait...



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Wildstar* #1

BACKGROUND: Wildstar traveled back in time to tamper with events and fix things. He was caught in a time-loop where he'd go back to the past to change things, repeating his actions over and over again. This time, however, was a little different ... like in any time travel story, things get a little complicated ... Wildstar's powers and costume come from the star on his chest, which is actually a symbiote from another world (and of course, the future). With it Wildstar can emit a force-blast, is super strong, and can fly.

WILDSTAR

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Wildstar* #1

BACKGROUND: The K'yoans shared technology with Earth that the government had only dreamed about in exchange for looking the other way while they searched for "something special." Another race, the Ra'Zplaar, came as well, and offered the same deal to America's largest competitor. Things eventually got out of hand and war broke out. When Wildstar travelled back in time to change these events, the bounty hunters were brought back as well. They work for the major corporations that the Ra'Zplaar have outfitted with symbiotes.

THE BOUNTY HUNTERS

NEWMEN

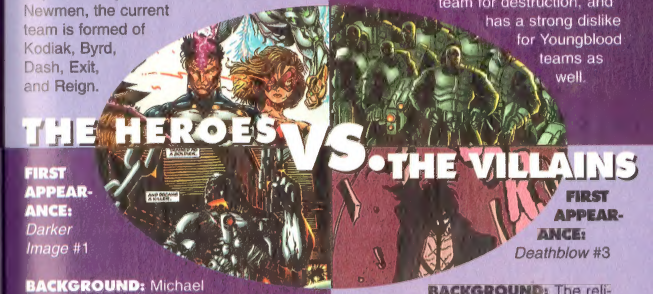
FIRST APPEARANCE: *Supreme* #11

BACKGROUND: The Newmen are formed of Nu-Gene positive humans banded together for the cause of good. The first group of Newmen opposed the villain Quantum and had him incarcerated, at the cost of being severely thrashed. When Quantum returned, a new group of Nu-Gene positives was formed to stop him. Working with Youngblood, Bloodstrike, Brigade, and Supreme, they put him down. Supervised by Proctor of the first Newmen, the current team is formed of Kodiak, Byrd, Dash, Exit, and Reign.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Team Youngblood #7*

BACKGROUND: The Brotherhood of Man is a group of normal humans armed with technology and bigoted against Nu-Gene positive humans. The group is apparently lead by the enigmatic Reigert, who knows the original Newmen's Proctor in some sort of capacity. The Brotherhood has targeted the Newmen team for destruction, and has a strong dislike for Youngblood teams as well.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Darker Image* #1

BACKGROUND: Michael Cray was one of the original members of Team 7, a group consisting of America's finest soldiers. When the team was exposed to the Gen-Factor, Cray was one of the few to remain seemingly unaffected. Years passed and Cray continued to work for I. O., eventually getting tired of the bloodshed only to find he had an inoperable cellular growth believed to be cancer. Recently, Cray has become involved in a quiet war between the Order of the Cross and The Black Angel, which may build into The Apocalypse.

DEATHBLOW

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Deathblow* #3

BACKGROUND: The religious brotherhood, The Order of The Cross, foiled The Black Angel nearly 2,000 years ago, burying him in the tomb known as Purgatory. Recently, agents of the Black Angel journeyed to Purgatory and defiled its seals, setting their master free. Now he strives to destroy the Miracle Child, collect the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, and bring about the end of the world. Since his awakening, The Black Angel has plagued Michael Cray's dreams, saying Cray would *lead* him to Armageddon.

THE BLACK ANGEL

GEN 13

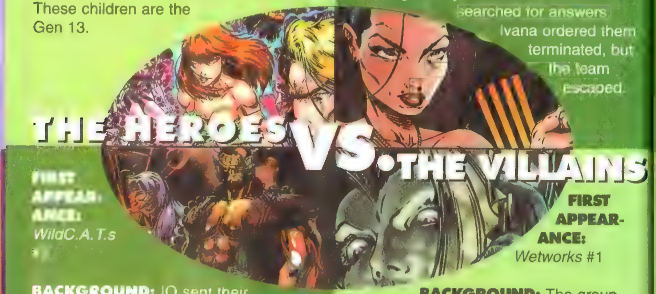
FIRST APPEARANCE: *Deathmate Black*

BACKGROUND: Back in the '70s, the intelligence agency IO desired its own team of super-powered agents and exposed one of the task forces, Team 7, to the powerful Gen-Factor. Those that survived received powers, but many later quit IO, tired of the blood on their hands. When IO found that the Gen-Factor had been passed down to their agent's children, the renegades were either persuaded to return or killed. A witchhunt soon pursued the remaining children. These children are the Gen 13.

IVANA

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Gen 13* #1

BACKGROUND: An IO bigwig, Ivana was chosen to reactivate Genesis as the Gen 13 project. The progeny of Gen 12 subjects and possible latents were gathered in an isolated compound in Death Valley for study and tests. Four of these subjects found they worked well as a team and succeeded as others failed out of the program. Ivana decided that if the group hadn't manifested powers by the next day, she'd have them terminated. That night, they manifested and searched for answers. Ivana ordered them terminated, but the team escaped.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *WildC.A.T.s* #1

BACKGROUND: IO sent their best operatives, Team 8, into the Balkans to retrieve a biological agent from a battlesite. The agent ended up being a metalloid compound controlled by nanotech wetware, an actual non-carbon-based life form. When a canister containing one of the entities was shattered, it bonded to the agent Claymore and covered him in liquid metal. Right after, the Night Tribe attacked. Claymore was able to fend them off until the rest of Team 8 took on the symbiotes as well.

WETWORKS

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Wetworks* #1

BACKGROUND: The group known as The Night Tribe is not known to the general populace, but they strike fear in the hearts of the leaders of International Operations. The Night Tribe may be better known to the world under the name 'Vampire.' The group, however, has a more technological than old world feel about them than is normally associated with Vampires. They may have even been responsible for the creation of the symbiotes that Team 8 made off with.

THE NIGHT TRIBE

BLOODSTRIKE

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Bloodstrike* #25

BACKGROUND: Very little is known of the man called Bloodstrike. The name once was put to an entire team of super-powered agents that had been brought in through Project: Born Again ... meaning they were dead before they were called into service. The only thing currently revealed about the character is that he is a government agent and one man arsenal. The future holds much in store for the character ... he'll be matched up against Prophet, the Katellan invasion force, the Brotherhood of Man, Cybernet, and Geiger.

THE KATELLANS

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Youngblood* #1

BACKGROUND: The Katellans are a race of aliens known since the Youngblood member Combat crash-landed on Earth with the Acacian Photon. In return for amnesty, the two turned technological information over to the government. However, a ship bearing Katellan forces drew close to Earth not too long ago. They put off any advances upon the return of Supreme to the planet, as the powerful hero helped them during his time in space—as well as fearing him. The future shows that their intentions are nothing less than invasion.



FIRST APPEARANCE: [illegible]

BACKGROUND: [illegible]phet was an experimental subject for [illegible] Garnet Wells in perfecting the [illegible]ate Soldier. Prophet was given [illegible]nced stamina, strength and speed, [illegible] equipped with radically advanced [illegible]ons. He was then promptly put [illegible]er cryogenic suspension and meant [illegible] activated many years into the [illegible]re. Prophet was created with a spe[illegible] purpose in mind, to eliminate the [illegible]e threat of Darkthornn's Disciples of [illegible]m. However, Prophet has been [illegible]akened ... 50 years too early.

PROPHET

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Youngblood* #2

BACKGROUND: The menace known as Darkthornn is destined to rule 50 years in the future. Sending his Disciples of Doom back in the past, Darkthornn meant to stop Prophet in the quick. However, the leaders of the resistance against Darkthornn, Kirby, and The Berserkers, came back as well to aid the hero. Only the combined might of the Youngblood team, Prophet, Kirby, and the Berserkers, were able to foil Darkthornn's schemes. The monstrous Darkthornn was not totally defeated though, and is fated to return soon.

DARKTHORNN

THE ORIGINAL HOT ARTIST HAS RETURNED TO TAKE HIS *YOUNGBLOOD* TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL. HE'S...

BACK AND TAKING IT TO THE EXTREME



ROB LIEFELD

YOUNG BLOOD

by Joe Fielder

One of the original brain children of Image Comics, Rob spoke to us about his reasons for leaving Marvel, his recent return to comics, and the full story behind the* Youngblood *animated series.

To begin with, what were the events that lead to the formation of Image?

I wasn't fired [from Marvel] actually. There was a threat that I was going to be when I did an ad for this thing called The Executioners. At 6:30 am Pacific time, I get this call, it's my editor saying "What are you doing, Rob? You're in trouble!" It was more of a friendly "What are you doing? Tell me about this." He hadn't even seen it yet. I told Bob what was going on and he said, "Man, it's got some people in an uproar." And I'm like, "Wait a second. The Executioners?!?" I mean, give me a break. There's not a book called *The Executioners*. The Executioners would later go on to be *The Berserkers* in *Youngblood*. But anyway, that afternoon Tom DeFalco called and said, 'Rob, you're going to get fired if you don't change this.' I caved to the pressure at the time but it was also like, "I'll be back." They can't stop a creator from creating or wanting to do what he wants to do.

The whole reason that I really felt that Image was a necessity in the long term was because I view comic professionals like athletes. An athlete only has a certain peak of his career. There's only a certain amount of time when you're going to be in a position to make your own decisions. [To Marvel Comics], we weren't important. Jim sold eight million copies by fluke. I sold five million copies by fluke. It was [the] Marvel Comics' that was on the rise that sold it. I still go back and I say, "OK, *X-Force* sold five million copies because of Marvel, but Cable and company didn't exist until I created them." So it's this weird argument, but I just think that we needed to move on. I was very much acting on that I thought this was the peak of my career and I needed to do something about it. I caved momentarily but Image would later resurface.

And then you had trouble putting out the *Art of Rob Liefeld* book.

Yeah, I mean, can you believe that? To this day, it bothers me because I grew up buying all those compilation books: *Art of Frank Miller, Art of John Byrne, Art of George Perez*. They always give them the rights. It's pretty much just basic advertising for the publishing companies. It's reprinting their material and giving them full credit, but Marvel told Malibu "No can do. You can't print anything from Rob's work here." And DC said the same thing. It was very obvious that [this] was like a preemptive strike. They can say all they want, but suddenly in the spring of 1991 they decided "We're not going to let you do that compilation book. We've been letting these go on for years, but we're going to pick a fight with you." Ultimately we had to cancel the book because it [would've been] like showing a film retrospective without the film.

They'd built up "Hey! It's Rob Liefeld on this book!' But then when it was a book that they weren't in on.

Right. The most important thing is, we won. They lost. If this were a game, two years later down the line, look at their market share. Look at our market share. We thrived. They struggled. I mean Marvel maintains a huge share of the marketplace based strictly on volume. Should we choose to go that route, I think we could seriously challenge them. But, we won't. That's not what we're about.

Talking about looking back, in Frank Miller's Diamond keynote speech he thanked all of you for breaking away from Marvel because it changed the industry. He said that it was a huge risk for all of you, but that's hard for people to realize since Image actually took off. What would you say the level of risk was?

We risked everything! The thing that a lot of people don't take into account is that we were gambling with our careers and future income. Sure we'd all made a nice little nest egg off our respective books, but by going out on our own we knew we'd be punished. We'd be made examples of. The week that *Youngblood* came out ... it was like "Let's start punishing people who are associated with them." There were people who were scared to do work with us because they said, "Oh, no, word on the street is that you can't work for Image. You can't do both." Now for years, you were able to work for DC and Marvel but now there was this company that you couldn't do work for.

I think we put our reputations on the line. We put our future incomes on the line and I can't stress that enough. We'd made that nice little nest egg, but that wasn't going to take care of us for the rest of our lives. There's also the issue of being able to work in this industry. The income was kind of a black list thing, and I think they were very intent on making an example of us if we'd failed. If there'd been no risk, it would have been formed 10 times over, 10 years before. It was the threat of being punished or being made an example that I think kept people from doing it for such a long time. And the only buffer that we had was that we were all enjoying a fair amount of fanfare at the time and the fans responded well to our work. I always based it on the fact that [for] Frank Miller at any time in his career after Daredevil, John Byrne post-*X-Men* or George Perez post-*Titans*—I'd of bought whatever they did whether it was Grandma's Comics or DC Comics. I felt that was the one thing that we could trust—that if we advertised it correctly and let people





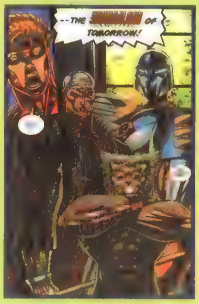
know that it was out there, our fans would be able to support us. And thankfully they did, but we risked a lot.

[Now] I look at a book like the *Newmen* #4 and the story basically revolves around 10 characters. I don't own five of the characters in that book. The writer and the penciler of that book created and own five of the different characters. There are four members of the Newmen that I created that I own and then a secondary character, and then there're two major heroes and two major villains that I don't have anything to do with. They're given a lot of spotlight, they're given a lot of presence in the comic book—and I think that's cool. That's how I wish it would've been with Marvel so that I could've walked away with all my stuff. Had that been the arrangement then Image wouldn't have been necessary. Epic Comics always existed, but name to me the Epic Comic that gets pushed as much as *Wolverine*. Marvel wasn't about to push the creator-owned stuff as much as they pushed the stuff they owned.

I look back now and it's cool that through Image and through Extreme Studios I enjoy giving creators a chance to own that which they create and do great work and be a part of the production values that we bring. And I look at guys like Peter David who just complain and they're just whiners, and I am thinking "What have you done for the creative community?!? Except cash checks?!?" Frank's definitely been a rogue. Kirby? One of the biggest rogues. These guys broke tradition. Then you've got this ... pundit sitting over there, and I go, "What does he ever do?" And then it starts bugging me. Whatever pleasure he's going to get out of reading this—two year's later, yeah, it bugs me that he said those things. At the time, I was so caught up with the hysteria of the situation trying to get things done but it bugs me.

Frank and I talked recently, about a week after the speech, we talked for a couple of hours and discussed all sorts of stuff ... creator's stuff. And y'know Image begat the imprints like Bravura and Legend, and those are some of the best stuff out there. And I love the Bravura stuff and the Legend stuff. I mean this entire studio empties the day when *Hellboy* hits the stands. And it'll be the same thing when *Monkeyman & O'Brien* hits the stands. And *Danger Unlimited*, and obviously *Sin City*. We're tripping over ourselves to get that issue. Frank and I were talking about [creator-owned work] and what Frank said in his speech—no one will ever draw *Sin City* except Frank. And upon the instance that that happens, it'll be someone that he hand-picks. But he completely controls that, and as a result it's the best work he's ever done.

And the Bravura stuff that I pick up is exceptional. Its creators are having a blast! I mean, yeah, we've all been



in bed with Wolverine and Captain America and Batman and had fun with them. But after a while you just go, "I'm so tired as to what I can do with this character." I mean, for the love of pete! [With] Cable, they were sitting there telling me how I could do [him.] It reminded me of the story that Jim Valentino told me about Alan Moore after he got *Swamp Thing* up and running. I remember when *Swamp Thing* was getting hot. People were picking it up and talking about it and going, "Man, this is really different from the *Swamp Thing* I read a couple years back." And suddenly that book became interesting, there was attention turned to it—and DC knocked Alan out of the driver's seat and said, "Thanks for drivin'? We'll take over now." And that's what happened at Marvel.

Another reason we got out ... Man, the moment [Marvel] went public—that was unbelievable. It's like, "Wait, I'm not going to exist to make some stock guy happy." It was like, "OK, time to leave!" It brought a whole new pressure to the job.

There are guys who enjoy doing work-for-hire. And one thing that I'd like to stress is that I still do work-for-hire. We all still do work-for-hire. I do trading cards for other companies. If I do a Star Wars trading card, I just did work-for-hire. But the thrust of my career now has been turned on creators' rights and turning this industry around to the point where it's no mystery that *The X-Men* sucks. Because all the good creators left! It's like, "Hey! You want to know why this book is dry now? It's because its creative talent left." And if they haven't left yet, they'll leave in time. I'll tell you right now–Jody Kubert? Adam Kubert? Matter of time. The clock is ticking over there—tick tick tick tick. One day, it's going to burn out and [they'll say], "I've drawn Wolverine one too many times. I'm going to draw my own book." And they can either talk to Bravura or talk to Legend or maybe they'll set up their own imprint with their dad. I'll use them as examples. [They're] two very talented guys. I think it's just a matter of time. I mean look at Steven Platt. He was on his way to the moon and then was like, "Oh, I can make a better



partnership? OK!' And he got out of that Marvel rocket and climbed into that DC-owned rocket in 10 seconds. And the stuff that he creates on *Hybrid*, he gets to keep!

It's a weird mix, but it works. If Eric Stephenson (who write and draw the Newmen) and I got into a disagreement and they walked, [their] characters would leave the book. And we'd have to explain that [the characters] went on vacation or whatever. It's just a creator-friendly atmosphere, and I think it is important for the industry to accomplish that. I think the comics industry as a whole is better for it. The companies—the Valiants and the Marvels and the DCs—can continue wincing because it hurts when Frank gets up and goes, "Creators are the most important stuff. Not the characters!" The best stories are going to be when that creator is in sync with that character. And when that creator leaves and that character becomes a lifeless husk, that's because the life's just left it. That life is that creator. The comic industry has been changed as a result of this creator-ownership boom. The creator has taken control now, and the companies don't like to hear that. Some of these companies are like slavery.

Let me throw in another thing when [Frank Miller thanked us in this speech] ... you want to hear jaws drop?!? Cha-chunk! Cha-chunk! Cha-chunk! One after another! I was sitting next to Jim Lee and Erik Larsen, and Todd was at the end of the table. Todd was like, "Oh my gosh! Are you hearing this?!?" And Jim and I are like, "Duhhh!" Because I told Frank, he's the closest thing to deification I've met in comics. He's like an entity. He's not like a person. He's Frank Miller. That guy—he just has his own sense of cool, and it comes with the work that he does. And for him to turn to us and acknowledge us the way no one has acknowledged us for two years ... when Frank said that, it almost felt like we were vindicated. None of us knew that that was coming.

We didn't do it to be thanked. We certainly did benefit off our gamble, but we certainly could have lost huge. Someone should do a 'What If Image tanked?' It could be a very ugly picture. It could be Todd McFarlane barely getting to draw an issue of *Archie*, and Rob Liefeld beggin' to draw the latest issue of *Darkstars*. Because I remember when John Byrne left Marvel to do Superman. When he came back an editor there told me, 'Y'know John came back and brought his wish list to us. He wanted to do *Silver Surfer*. He wanted to do *X-Factor*. He wanted to do all this stuff. We threw it away and said, "No John. Here's what you get to choose from. You get to do *West Coast Avengers* or *She-Hulk* or this or that." They have a long memory.

You've taken some time away from comics recently. How does it feel to be back?

It's fun. I feel like I have a career that's been held off and I want to take it back. I've got to get out there and work hard again.

What do you have planned?

To continue to do *Youngblood* and to surprise people. I'm going for something different. I think it's about time as well. There's a certain crowd that was obviously disappointed with the lack of





content, and I can admit that. But I think as a result of that I've been labeled And it's fun. It's fun to try to break those labels. And I think with *Youngblood*, it's been decidedly different. We're going to have a focus on the character. People are going to be like, "I don't remember this being in a Rob Liefeld book before." I think even the pacing is different. The response in the mail [makes it appear that this] is exactly what they want to see. That big action in-your-face stuff—I needed to take a break from that and do something different

What other things does Extreme have coming out?

Gosh. We have so much stuff. The regular books that we do are *Bloodstrike*, *Brigade*, *Prophet*, *Supreme*, *Youngblood*, *Team Youngblood* and *Newmen*. For the summer we've got *Doom's IV*, and a couple *Troll* one-shots and some special projects. And in the fall we have *Badrock & Company* and another Supreme title that Keith Giffen has done three issues of plotted layout. Keith did a brief stint on *Bloodstrike*, and when he was leaving he said, "Y'know, anytime you guys want me to do something with Supreme—that's my favorite Image character." And I said to Eric, "It's time to get him involved in this." Eric Stephenson called him and ... when Keith's excited .. the fax machine was spitting out all these pages–ptut ptut ptut ptut. And it's killer. For five months we searched for the right artist. We're signing a contract with Jeff Johnson. I feel like he's one of the comic industry's unknown gems. I think it'll be an incredible book. It's called The *Legend of Supreme*, and it'll be coming out [in] either December or January.

Then I've got Kurt Busiek teaming up with me to do a project called *Youngblood: Year One*. We've planted so many seeds [for it] in *Youngblood* over the last few years. In issue #0, it shows Sentinel introducing Shaft to the team he's going to lead and command. He meets all of them, and you recognize all of them—and then there's this Link guy. And we get letters constantly to this day, "Who's Link? Where's Link? When will we see Link?" And we'll tell you what happens with that guy [in the book.] And there are two aliens on the Youngblood team and they're from two different planets and they were both found on the same ship. One bartered with the government for amnesty here in exchange for all this alien technology, and the government bit, they went for it. That technology created the Youngblood program in the first place and stuff like that. Kurt's flying down in two weeks so we can nail everything shut and he can turn in the plots. I think it's going to be a very entertaining story. I'm just kind of taking a peek at the back history, because I've always loved that stuff.

Marvels, you could call *Marvel: Year One*. That book just stunned me. That, and the *Golden Age*, are my two favorite books of the last year. And Kurt came down to Image for a visit and was showing us some submissions in terms of future projects. (One of his books we'll be announcing very soon as an upcoming Image comic book.) But I said, "Want to get together on this *Youngblood: Year One* stuff?" And he bit. He's real hungry to get out there and do good work. And I'm hungry to work with good writers.

I wanted to bring back Youngblood on my own terms. I didn't want it to be someone else saved *Youngblood*. I didn't want Jim Shooter to be the savior. I wanted Jim Shooter to write me some great stories once I got everything together and solidified. I think that's in the process of happening over the next few months and the next few issues. Then it's going to be part of strengthening the franchise with the *Youngblood: Year One* with Kurt and the Jim Shooter work that now has been moved to 95. Last time I gambled and I hit, then it kind of petered down because I really think there was a lack of content. Letter after letter, people would mention, "We want to know more about the characters." And I think that's what we're giving them now. We're bringing back *Youngblood* kind of quietly and then we're going to build it up from here and hopefully get it stronger and bigger and expand the franchises. *Team Youngblood* now is very closely tied into [*Youngblood*]. We made the conscious decision to run both books back and forth as they've done so well with the *Superman* books.







And I think some of the new talent is actually getting noticed [on books like *Team Youngblood*, *Newmen* and *Gen 13*.] And it's good to see the guys here grow into their strengths and get better at what they do. And it's only a matter of time until they turn to us and say, "Well, we're going to do our own books. How do you feel about that?" Like we did to Marvel. And we will, unlike Marvel, say, "OK, Let's do it!"

I want to talk to you about working on the Image *X Month* project, but there's really nothing I can ask you. I hear the other founders are having a great time with it.

Me too. It is fun. When we were at Marvel and got bored with a job, it was really easy to talk to another editor and say, "Hey, can we draw fill-in an issue?" And at Image it hasn't been like that at all. You'd want to do a job comparable with or better than the issue that preceded you. It's very competitive like that, at least we are. I think some of us really need the fresh air. It's like, "Oh, you mean I get to go play in somebody else's sandbox? Oh, I'll show you how your character should be. Let me show you how to handle that team or that character." I think that's the appeal for us for Image *X Month*. Of going, "Oh, OK. I get this guy's character for a month. Right, I'm going to turn it on its ear." Who knows? One of us might destroy the franchise in one month because of Image *X-Month*. "Oh no, this book can't rebound because of Image Mystery Month." (Laughter)

(Many fans noticed that in the back of Youngblood *#6, Rob printed a three-page comic of himself proposing marriage to his longtime girlfriend Joy Beth Creel. The response was apparently "Yes." And the ceremony is on for fall/winter of this year. Congratulations to the both of you from* HERO*!)*



TAKING

THE WORD ABOUT

SHADOWLINE'S

BACK

FUTURE, AND THE

TRUTH BEHIND

THE

MAJOR'S PAST.

KNIGHT

JIM VALENTINO

SHADOW HAWK

by Joe Fielder

From his days on AV's Normalman to Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy to his current creation ShadowHawk for Image, Jim Valentino has been one of the most outspoken people in comics. Jim talked with us about his beliefs on the topic of creators' rights, his own creations, and the industry in general in this in-depth, no-holds-barred interview.

What were your reasons for leaving Marvel?

Mine? I was fired. I didn't want to

SHADOWHAWK

I remember George Perez telling me that a kid came up to him once at a convention after he left Marvel and went to DC and the kid said, "Gee, I really love your work, Mr. Perez. It's too bad I can't read it anymore." He said, "Why not?" "Well, you're doing a DC book now and I don't read DC." That was a prevalent wisdom at the time. I know Byrne personally sort of sidestepped that one when he did Superman and he brought a lot of his readers with him over to

try stemming from Frank Miller's keynote speech for Diamond right now. Part of what he spoke on was what a huge risk it was for Image to break away from Marvel. What level of risk was there for you?

The level of risk

wasn't the risk. When

very, very worried about whether we could

went with

because the

book personally.

some sort of

battle







agreement. That really wasn't

I didn't think he was

quite a bit of talk in the

enormous. I have five children. I wasn't on a million-selling book. We almost lost our house in the summer of 1992. It came real close. We were saved by a card deal with Topps. That put us through the summer and that saved us but if it wasn't for that Topps deal, we would've probably lost our house.

As far as everyone else everyone had different levels of risk because everybody was in a different position financially. However, you have to remember at that time in early 1992 there was still such a thing as a Marvel Zombie and the current wisdom held that if it didn't have a Marvel 'M' in the corner box you could almost guarantee that it wasn't going to sell—especially well in the numbers that a Marvel book would. People seem to forget that

anteed us a certain amount of sales. We figured if we could have these sales guaranteed, then we could get the deal over the top at the very least, because none of us knew what was going to happen. When you have three [illegible] guys ever an[illegible]

[illegible] for-hire on their books. What's the difference between Marvel hiring a penciller or inker and Image doing [illegible]?

Well, I think the deeper question is how can you exclusive creators rights and still do work-for-hire? For [illegible] every [illegible] creator [illegible] who can [illegible] owns. Let's take The Pact for example. I created The Pact. I created the characters. I created the concept. I created it. OK? I own it. It's my toy. Now, I've allowed other people to play with my toy, for, that I pay them fairly well, I've taken them in the benefits of that—very much the same way Marvel or DC would. They've been with respect and we've dug deep and we've created something [illegible] I'm a whole saying that I have no claim to whatever on that character, to that concept, it is theirs, they created it—they own it—and that's the only fair way to do it.

Image was formed under the idea of creators' retaining their creations, but [illegible]

Stanley would sell own Thanos. Steve Gerber would sell own Howard the Duck. Jack Kirby would either own or co-own the entire Marvel Universe. That's the way it should be done. That's the way it should've been done all along.

So I think that's really the difference. You can do work-for-hire and do it hon[illegible]ably. The way to do that is to retain that basic tenet of creators rights—the word ownership.

Some people blame Image either partly or wholly for the market crash last year. How would you respond to that?

I think the market crashed because the market was raised by [illegible] years by, I think, [illegible] magazine, into a feeding frenzy where [illegible] brought it over to comics. Now I illustrate that by asking anyone to look and take a look at their back issues and the way they purchased and produced. Valiant. I don't have anything against



Valiant and I don't have anything against Wizard or anybody else, but I think they did this and I think the record proves that they did it. They made a bunch of books with collectible value into "valuable not commodities." And when the speculation died—ploom. They hit the ground. I think Valiant more than anybody proves that point. I think with Image there was some real genuine heat there. The time were really behind the company, but I think Valiant brings it up to a level of, "Well, gee...it wasn't genuine heat all the way was this propped up the way we were?" And again, I just ask people to look at the record and look at it really, really carefully. I think this card mania covered [illegible] the acquisition of the "hot" properties that kids were going to make a fortune off of. It's already worth over a hundred dollars now. If you buy Hardings now



[illegible]s, it ain't going to be "Hot," it going to be worth money, [illegible] you ain't going to get it.





[illegible] Steve Rude's Nexus #1 [illegible] this, though admittedly I'm not as good a writer as Alan Moore or good an artist as Rick Veitch or Steve Bissette. But I'm going to give it my college all. Then next year we'll be kicking off a new series called *The Reapers*. And it's about behind-the-scenes is—

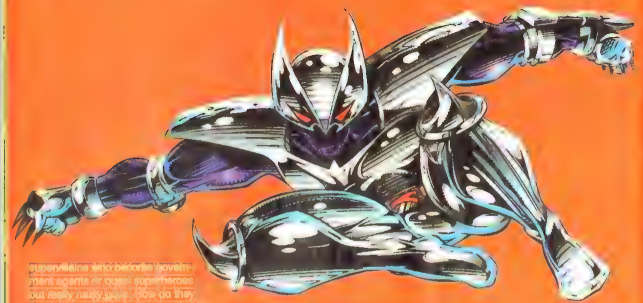
What do supervillains do on their time off? I mean, what do they do? I wanted to know, so I posed the question to Kurt and it seemed he wanted to write something along those lines. Not about



Brave & the Bold. He's teaming up with Chapel, WildC.A.T.s, 1963 characters, Supreme, The Others, and Spawn. And after that story line wraps up, the character dies.

But before that happens, in December of this year, we're going to be releasing a *Shadowhawk* Special. Please going to have two stories in it: an Images of Tomorrow and an Images of Yesterday. The Images of Tomorrow will be the first story featuring the new Shadowhawk, and that's the writer by Kurt Busiek and drawn by Walter





supervillains who become government agents or quasi-superheroes but really, really screw. How do they rationalize it? How do they justify it? What are they like when they're not pulling a bank heist? So Kurt Busiek will be writing this series. Wilfred McDaniel and Jason Goldie will be doing the art for it. It should be really



I'm also developing, with Keith Giffen right now, a book called *The Galactic Legion*. What Keith and I discovered, talking to one another while he was doing the Images crossover/dweeb story was that we were both working toward the exact same story in *The Legion of Superheroes* and *The Guardians of the Galaxy*. So basically what we've decided to do since we were both unable to do that in the original books, we're going to tell our very end kind of pseudo stories together. There are two or three groups in the story. My group is a group of flawed heroes who are sort of moving toward the good guys. His group is a group of flawed villains who are also moving toward the gray area. Ultimately, it's the story of a messianic child and what happens when someone who knows no responsibility has ultimate power. So it's going to be rather complex when we get to it. Right now we're still in the planning stages and discussing it back and forth. We're bringing Tom and Mary Bierbaum in on it because they are very steeped in certain lore. For those people who either are not on the Guardians of Keith's work or the *Legion*, I think they're really going to like this book a lot. It's going to be very dramatic, potentially very good. That's what we're aiming for.

And we're doing *Shadowhawk* sometime, a new *Shadowhawk* series, but I can't really say much more about that right now. But there will be another *Shadowhawk*. Over the last week or so, it came up with a new character that I'm very interested in. It's a new female character. We've tried, her name is Integrity. I'm having a really good time with it so far, so hopefully I'll be able to develop it to a point where we can actually launch a series next year. Image doesn't have a female character book out there and this one has enough twists and turns in her that it's interesting from a writer's standpoint. Also, in February, *Shadowhawk* is going to do his first intercompany crossover. We'll be announcing that in San Diego.

Normalman/Megalon Man will be coming out in the last week in July. It's by me and Don Simpson, with Bob Burden and Larry Marder—four questions: the Flaming Carrot and Mr. Seacat from the *Beatnogs*rd. The basic concept for that story is it begins where *Spitting Image* #2 left off, basically with Deputy Everything and Megaton Man bursting in on the Spitting Image characters and asking if they can join the Spitting Image Universe. And of course they get rejected. They want to see our exec become multi-quest-millionaires too, but they don't know how. The first person they run across is The Flaming Carrot and they figure he could tell them how to get out and become multi-quest-millionaires, and the insanity sort of ensues from there. It's a satire and it skewers some—as direct ease as quasi-people in the comic book industry.







advertisement I would get ads for Hepcats. The back cover is for Shadowhawk are great ones. They can't be bought. They're now given away and they're given away to independent self-creators. People who are self-publishing. Or people with unique visions. Basically, my friends. (Laughter) So we've given them away to Scott McCloud for *Understanding Comics*, which I think is an incredible book that everyone should read. A *Distant Soil*, *Hepcats*, *Bone*, *Maidman*, and few others. We've got Steve Bissette's *Tyrant* coming up. I think these are great books and if the Image reader will take the chance and try some of these books as they have that they like something else besides superheroes and that there are really great books out there that aren't genre-oriented. That are just good books—they're well-written, they're well-drawn. And that's basically what I'm trying to do with this, give a little back to the people I came







TODD'S
SPAWN'S FAVORITE
WORLD
TODD McFARLANE
SPAWN

by John Benton

Todd McFarlane is a name that's been synonymous with the phrase 'fan favorite artist' for some time now. Perhaps Image's most popular artist, Todd is known for speaking his mind on whatever topic presents itself, almost as much as for his work on Spider-Man and Spawn. This interview proves to be no different, as McFarlane answers a gambit of questions running from his personal opinions on current news bites to his own personal history in comics.

First question: Did O.J. do it?

From 20 minutes into that thing I had him nailed. I know that [the authorities] don't open their mouths unless they've got something, and they opened their mouths real early, where with Tonya [Harding] they were like, let's wait. Tonya was attached to a couple of alone-headed high-school dropouts and it *still* took them four months to fig ure it out. So I figure this guy must have left a "%$#&*@ bloody trail that my grandma with her bad eye could have tripped over for them to even make mention of some of the evidence.

Geez, that proves a point: you can talk about anything!

ing I tell people is not that I erything, but I think I do. A lot things that I do in this business my life, it isn't so much that I ny better answers than anybody s just that I have very strong ns to my opinions, so I get real e of my stuff. Worse than that, or my beliefs! Kill or be killed. a simple philosophy I have. If got a difference of opinion with body else, either prove them or they'll prove you wrong. I compromise, I'll do that too. But n there saying either I'll kill you kill me, if that's the only way going to find the answer, you'll e bottom of a lot of problems. When I negotiate stuff, they can't do this," or "You can't ." Then we have nothing to about.

e obviously taken that attitude of your negotiations.

s the attitude I take in life, peri e of the things that I think peo hot really aware of is that Todd ne's been around for over 30 didn't just create this persona attitude. This thing goes back I was three years old.

is important to you?

nd foremost, my wife and my oy girl. Every decision I make is pon how it will They're that help

my first pro l job. Because was ahead ule, *Coyote*







went and got the job with Roy Thomas on *Infinity Inc.*. By the time that saw the day of light, I think they both came out the same week. I looked like I was prolific right in the first week, but it was just a matter of scheduling.

Your early work seemed to be characterized by wild layouts.

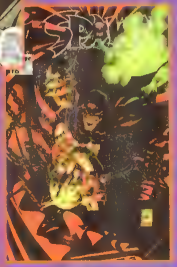
From the very first day that I broke into comic books, the first thing I said to both Steve Englehart and Roy Thomas was, "I don't want to do the standard stuff. I'm not good enough to get away with the standard stuff, first off. Number two, I need to do something that gets people to pay attention to me. I had to play to my strengths instead of playing to my weaknesses. At that point I'd graduated from the university with a degree in graphic design, so I wanted to do design pages, arty-fartsy stuff. That really is bad storytelling, in hindsight. If nothing else, it made my stuff look a little bit different from the other 10 kids who happened to break in that month. From day one that I started to break into this business, I was trying to push the doors a little bit. A lot of people think that I've become a crazy man in the last couple years. It was there since day one.

Did Marvel force you to back away from that?

When I went to Marvel to do *Incredible Hulk*, they told me they didn't want me to do that. They had their way of doing stuff. Which ended up being good, because up until that point I'd been hiding behind graphic design. That forced me to learn a little bit of storytelling. I did that, but once I started to feel comfortable with the standard Marvel "house style," I started playing with the pages. You need to make changes. You can't be too abrupt about stuff, especially when you're going to do it from the inside. You do it slowly and methodically, so that one day they wake up and go (gasp) "Todd, what are you doing here? There's these eight weird pages!" I go yeah, but there's only one in the first issue. By the time you caught on, I'm up to issue #8.

When I got on *Amazing Spider-Man*, it was my decision to say I wanted to make it a little design, but I also wanted to make it semi-decent storytelling so I wasn't confusing the kids. What I wanted to do–and what I still strive to do–is to









How do you feel about the fact that your style has become the "new" norm?

Do not answer. Big business, in a certain way, and the way they run it, tends to think and react in certain ways. The corporate guidelines, and it becomes the status quo. The only thing that bothers me on that level is that the new kid coming in may be that kid that has *another* way of doing *Spider-Man* that might be 20 times better than anything anybody's ever seen. You'd think it would be far more rewarding to let people have their head and see what they come up with, without dictating to them. That's why I resented it, because they wanted John Romita's style on *Spider-Man*. Why would I want to do someone that's already made his mark on *Spider-Man*? I want to go and make my own mark. It was the same attitude that I had when I started on comic books. I needed to watch out for my career, so I

look different.

What happened when you decided to write your own book?

When I quit [Amazing] Spider-Man, I got to the point where I was no longer satisfied with the work and the writing, and I'm not saying that I'm satisfied at that point, I know that I was never satisfied with my work. But I was at a point where I was no longer willing to do any more than I'd been doing. I wasn't willing to do any more than I'd been doing. I wasn't willing to do any more than I'd been doing. I wasn't

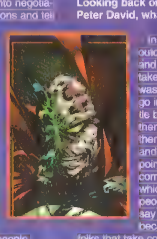
You have to get thick skin when you get to a certain point. If I've got to worry about the critics, I'm going to get a bleeding ulcer. When it all comes down to it, for as many people complain about the stuff, you'll see there's a lot of kids that have got smiles on their faces. When I look at that kid's smiling face that's why I can fight the adults so long. They want to keep this stuff away from you. They want to tone it down. Forget it. These kids don't need to be protected; they get it. It'd be nice if we gave them a little more credit.

How did you feel about the risks involved in launching Spawn?

I knew number one was going to sell. Todd McFarlane at that point in his career doing an issue #1, why wouldn't it sell? I was more concerned not about







issue #1, but issues #8, 9, 10, 12, 20, 30, 40... I wasn't that thrilled about [#1]. I knew we were going to sell a lot. It's just a matter of keeping the momentum. I'm far more proud of when I look at the charts at issue #21 or 22, and *Spawn* is still number one or number two in sales. To me, what is far more gratifying is that *Spawn* is still in the top 10 without doing any tricks. If you want to say bringing on good writers is a trick, then I guess I did that trick. But I didn't trick anybody. I put out the book, period. End of the conversation.

You obviously don't need the money anymore. What's keeping you in the business?

The issue was never money. If you read the first thing I wrote in *Spawn*, it was respect. I was the highest paid guy in the country when I quit. If it was money, why would I walk away from a job where I'm the highest-paid guy? That seems rather stupid. I just couldn't do my work anymore and feel good about it. I don't care if they paid me a million dollars; it didn't make any difference to me. It has always been about me living my life the way that I want to. That's it, end of conversation.

Because of taking the actions that we've taken, have we made money? Yeah. We can't help it. They send us checks, and at the end of the month we cash them! But if the zeroes were smaller, I'd still be doing it. This isn't about going to do different stuff only if it sells half a million a month. This is about doing creator-owned stuff because I'm tired of working in this business. That's all that was about. I control my destiny. I controlling my destiny gives me a good paycheck; that's a bonus. The bonus becomes that the more money you have, the more control you have. You become sort of powerful so that you can now go into negotiations and tell

people, "F**k you. I don't need your money. I've got plenty of money. What I need is this. You give me this, and we've got something to talk about."

If it's not money, what do you want from the companies you deal with?

I want sensibility, and I want some creative control over it. I want to know that this baby that I created and gave life to, when you adopt it I want visitation rights. I'm not asking for anything crazy. I'm willing to give it up for adoption; that should be a big enough move on my part. All I want is a hand into the input of what's going on. I can't allow you guys to take Spawn, whore him out, and then sit there and when it doesn't work, hand him back to me. Now I've got to go to conventions and answer the questions as to why this sucks. If I have a say in it and it sucks, I can look the kid in the eye and go, "It was my fault." I can live with those decisions, the ones that I make. What I can't live with is somebody making a decision for me that affects my life.

Why do so many people feel like they have to pick on you?

Because I'm an easy target, I mean, I put myself in the position too; it's not like I stay away from it. I invite it, so I don't want to say, "Woe is Todd." The reason that I go out looking for it is because it's kind of exciting sometimes. This is the kind of stuff that just kills me in print, because it comes out egotistical. I put out my book, and my book is successful, and I've won my awards and got a lot of loyal fans, but after a while that doesn't float my boat. I've got to have something else that keeps me going. A lot of those fights that I go into are the things that keep me going these days. I just do it sometimes because

Looking back on your "debate" with Peter David, what do you think?

In terms of the actual outcome, he carved me up and spit me out. My whole take on the whole episode was that I just wanted to go in there and have a little bit of fun. I thought there was an opportunity there to have a few laughs and both of us to have our points of view and not take comic books so seriously, which is why I think a lot of people go crazy over me. I say and do a lot of things because I know that the folks that take comic books so seriously are going to be reading it, and I just knew it's going to give them a bleeding ulcer. I just thought that it could have been a little bit more fun. I looked out at the audience, and I saw that the audience wanted a lynching, because at that point Todd McFarlane represented image, which was these punks that were doing better than they were. Jealousy was a very big thing. I looked at their faces and went, "If you guys want to see a lynching, I'm going to give them a lynching." If you were there, it's probably one of the more passive times you've ever seen Todd McFarlane. I just sat there and took it, and I didn't really get crazy. Excuse me for my naivete that I thought even though we dislike each other we could have a little fun about it, but that one didn't really work.

So you feel it got taken out of hand?

No, I just think it got taken too seriously. I don't take myself that seriously. I fight for things, but you never heard

ds think I'm decent. That means I

going to start to sit there and argue

sometimes. That's

ect Frank Miller. I my fellow guys at

guy who goes out nd follows his own , whether his book e copies or five mi- g the exact same thing I've nich isn't anything that's new. Dave Sim for all that he's put over the years. I respect everywalked away from something e, "Nah, this isn't what I want." I

Marvel Comics. o say/couldn't Marvel Comics. If

ys for finding something they life. I just wasn't able to find it me spot. I have to go look in a spot.

out that makes any kind of

something like Gary Groth who says, "I think that superhero comics suck," I can bite into that. But if you want to say that one







comic book is a piece of work, and another comic book, even though it sells 10 times more, isn't a piece of work, then you're trying to tell society what they like and what they don't like. That people like *Spawn* doesn't make me a genius writer or a genius artist. It makes it *Spawn*. Comics isn't high art.

What I'm trying to establish is that even though Spawn isn't really paying attention and trying to be a hero, his actions are basically having reactions to

being the leader of the alleyways. At

number one goal, which is to get his life back. He's starting to get a little more accustomed to what he is, which is basically an outcast.

How do you feel about the comic fans who consider you the next-worst thing to the anti-Christ?

It bugs me that people forget that they were 10 years old once. That drives my crazy. When you were 10 you just enjoyed it and nobody really rationalized it. Now that we've got this big forum, all of these 20-year-old people forget they were 8 years old, and they won't allow the kids to be kids. Don't

NAME WITHHELD, OPINIONS NEVER!

ERIK LARSEN - SAVAGE DRAGON



By John Benton

Erik Larsen...

...on bell-bottoms.

Hey, I bought bell-bottoms until they stopped making them. I went in to buy some new pants and they'd stopped producing them. I was hopelessly distraught. I know, pathetic, hopelessly behind the times.

...on his beginnings.

I started doing fanzines. Me and a couple other pals produced our own comic book. We sent it to a lot of places, actually, and a lot of places ran reviews of it. One of the guys who read those reviews was a guy named Gary Carlson. Gary Carlson was an avid fanzine collector who was wanting to start up his own comic book, so he contacted me through that fine publication which I'd put out, and asked if I wanted to do some work for him on this comic that he was putting out called *Megaton*. I jumped at the chance, and the rest, as they say, is kind of history. One thing kind of led to another.

...on his first Marvel work.

I met [Jim] Shooter at the Chicago Con. I'm not sure how many years ago. I'd sent him submissions over the years, and he'd always send back a postie "close, but no cigar, keep at it." I met him at Chicago and we hit it off all night. We talked about me doing a story for him. He said, "Would you like to do a story for *Marvel Fanfare*?" Which to me was like, "Oh, wow, *Marvel Fanfare*! An upscale publication!" What I didn't know was that meant "Would you like to do an inventory story?" We actually sat down at the show and plotted it out together. I sent it in to them, and eventually it saw print, but it sat around for a long time. The good thing about it was that it was a great sample book/show people because it was mixed Marvel characters in actual battle and stuff like that. It was Hulk versus Thor. It ended up seeing print years later as an issue of *Thor*. It ended up being scripted by Stan Lee and inked by Vinnie Colletta. I was pretty much just filling in for old Jack Kirby there.

...on *Doom Patrol*, his first regular series.

I enjoyed working on the book. I got to flex my muscles creatively a lot more than I probably should have been allowed to. They just sort of said, "Well, it doesn't seem to be working, so just go nuts, kid." I mean, [today] I would yell at people for doing the stuff that I'd been doing then. I would re-write the scripts and the plots and re-work them. There were issues that barely resembled what was put down there, and they just let me get away with it. I was shocked. I didn't know any better! I didn't know that's not how it worked. Then, of course, when I went over to work at Marvel and tried those kinds of shenanigans ... it didn't happen, let's put it that way.

...on creative restrictions at Marvel.

It's the way that the company is organized. But now I'm not doing *The Dragon*, and I can do whatever I want to with the Dragon. When I was doing *Spider-Man*, I was one of five people doing *Spider-Man*. There were so many things I couldn't do with *Spider-Man* just because there were four or five other people doing *Spider-Man*. You can't just go and do your little fun thing that you think would be cool.

...on forming Image.

Rob [Liefeld], Todd [McFarlane], and I had talked about doing our own crossover for a long time. Rob was going to do a book for Malibu called *Youngblood*, and he had asked me if I was interested in doing a miniseries or something at the same time. At the time, we weren't even talking about it being Image Comics, we were just going to be doing a couple of miniseries at the same time we were doing work for Marvel. We weren't talking about leaving or doing much of anything. This was just me and Rob hanging out, being buds. Then I guess he talked to Valentino about the same time, a little later maybe, about doing the same. Shortly thereafter, Todd got involved and we decided to make a clean break, actually go away from Marvel and do an on-our-own sort of thing. That's when we actually split off and did it. I think the last guys on board were Jim [Lee] and Marc [Silvestri]. I know sometimes when all this stuff gets reported it seems like Todd, Rob, and Jim got together and talked about this stuff, and decided to form their own company, and they decided to invite along a couple buds. It wasn't that way at all.

When you say, "When were you asked to join Image?" there wasn't really an Image to be asked to join. It evolved into that. It was just Rob saying, "Do you want to do a miniseries for Malibu?" At the time, we had even talked about







doing a book together. Rob and Todd and I have always been really close, hanging out at conventions and being pals and stuff like that. It was a very natural evolution to suddenly decide to become a comic book company.

...on the risks involved in breaking from Marvel.

We could always go home again, so it never seemed like it was that big of a deal. As long as you can sell comic books with your talent, people will give you work to do that. So it was like, "Let's go try this out." If it doesn't work, we could always go back to doing Marvel and DC. At the time, I didn't have a regular book. It wasn't like I was leaving a regular assignment to go do this stuff. A lot of it was that we hadn't intended to be exclusively Image from then on. Some of it was that Marvel's reaction to us was very strong. They'd assumed that we were gone. OK, if you guys want to cut us off of your comp list and call us names, I guess we are gone. It's very strange how it all came about.

...on choosing his project for Image.

Actually, I was going to do *Superpatriot. The Dragon* was always one of those things that I wanted to do. When I started thinking about what I wanted to do with this Superpatriot guy, I just got to thinking I should just do The Dragon. I'd been wanting to do this character forever, but my first inclination was not to do *The Dragon*. Then I ended up doing both.

...on the "writers vs. artists" debate.

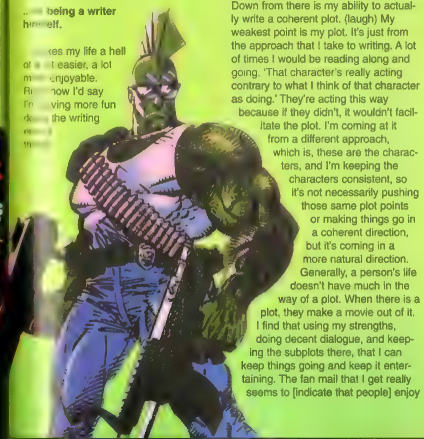
The problem with comics in general is that there are a lot of very, very marginal writers writing comic books that are just kind of bland and uninteresting, repeating the same schtick again, and again, and again. These people who are just untalented in their actual ability to do something are jealous when someone else who is fairly untalented at being able to do something wants to do the same thing, but also has the ability to draw. There is a group of people who may not be better writers than the people who have been doing it for 20 or 30 years, but they're at least bringing to it a different approach and coming at it from a different angle. Their craft may not be as high in terms of their ability to string words together into a coherent sentence. I mean, Todd's got an energy to his work that I don't read in Mike W. Barr. Maybe the actual construction of sentences and the way that he puts things together is not the same as these other guys, but he's bringing to the page a different perspective and a different energy that I find highly enjoyable. I get more enjoyment out of reading that stuff than I get out of reading a lot of the guys that have been toiling in this field for 10 or 20 years.



...on his complaints with comic book writers.

The main problem with comic book writers is that they're coming from prose and they're not thinking visually. Comic books are different from any other medium, in that it is very difficult to pull off a surprise. When you're watching TV, you don't see the rest of the scene at the same time. When they turn the page, they're not only seeing the panel you want them to see, but they have also seen the next six panels, eight panels, however many panels are on that two-page spread. In order to pull off a surprise, it's difficult. It's not an easy thing to pull that off. They're forgetting the medium that they're involved in. You can't have a surprise on panel three, because you've already seen the surprise when you see panel one. You can't do it that way. A lot of times I've heard this complaint from editors: "Don't have a character's hand come out of a panel border. You don't see Mel Gibson's hand coming out of a movie screen." That's a physical limitation of a movie. You don't show his hand coming out of the screen because you can't show his hand coming out of the screen. We don't have that limitation. There are a lot of things we can do in this medium. Don't limit us to the limitations of another medium. We've got enough limitations in that we can't show movement. The thing that I don't understand is the people who are writing this stuff aren't used to working in a static mode. We've got ways of trying to fake a movement, but there are things you can't do. The people who are writing and drawing their own stuff are at least coming at it from an artistic stance. They're not going to do those kind of mistakes. A lot of times they're going to be taking a different approach







...the one that they've been used to working on.

...on writers he likes.

People get this impression after the "Name Withheld" thing that I hate writers and that all my experiences working with writers were bad. That's not the case at all. I love good comic books! I like nothing more than a good comic book.

I think Frank Miller's a great writer. Chris Claremont can be a very good writer, he's varied from time to time. I think Alan Moore is a great writer. Dave Sim's kind of bounces around from being pretty good to pretty damn boring. I like Ken [Giffen's] stuff. I liked when [J. M.] DeMatteis worked with Keith, but I haven't really liked anything DeMatteis has done on his own. When I was growing up, I really liked Marv [Wolfman] and Len [Wein], not so much now. There's not really anything that's coming out these days that really has grabbed me all worked up. That's too bad. I like what Frank's doing, but I've always liked when Frank does stuff. But there are a few people writing comics now that I go, 'Wow, that's a good read.' Even the stuff that people recommend and say you've got to read it because it's brilliant, I don't get it. What's so damn interesting about this?

...on being a writer himself.

Writing makes my life a hell of a lot easier, a lot more enjoyable. Right now I'd say I'm having more fun doing the writing and the inking end of things than doing the penciling stuff, because it's newer. I've been drawing comics for myself or for publication for a good 20 years. It's nice to be able to be in the driver's seat and take things in a direction that I want to take them in. I'm having a hell of a time doing it.

...on his own ability as a writer.

I think I'm OK. My strongest point is that I've got natural sounding, believable dialogue. Down from there a little bit is that I can keep different subplots dovetailing in and out of the story. Down from there is my ability to actually write a coherent plot. (laugh) My weakest point is my plot. It's just from the approach that I take to writing. A lot of times I would be reading along and going, 'That character's really acting contrary to what I think of that character as doing.' They're acting this way because if they didn't, it wouldn't facilitate the plot. I'm coming at it from a different approach, which is, these are the characters, and I'm keeping the characters consistent, so it's not necessarily pushing those same plot points or making things go in a coherent direction, but it's coming in a more natural direction. Generally, a person's life doesn't have much in the way of a plot. When there is a plot, they make a movie out of it. I find that using my strengths, doing decent dialogue, and keeping the subplots there, that I can keep things going and keep it entertaining. The fan mail that I get really seems to [indicate that people] enjoy what I'm doing, but I'm taking a different approach from what's traditional in comic books.

...on being an editor.

I do maintain a lot of control. I'll come to Tom [and Mary Bierbaum] or I'll come to Keith Giffen and say what I want to do. You can have free rein to do what you want to, but somehow within the context of that story, this is what must happen. I'm a fairly active editor. I'm not just sitting back and saying "bring me a story." All of these things that are coming out from me are fairly calculated. They're not put out for the sake of doing more stuff. It's really with a plan in mind for where these things will be going. A lot of things in the book are fairly calculated; they were set up a long time ago, some of the stuff even from the beginning.

...on his *Savage Dragon* artwork.

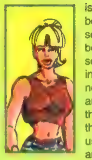
I think this is the kind of book I should have been drawing. Knowing my own strengths, I never would have assigned myself to *Spider-Man*. That's not the kind of character that I naturally draw well. I'd be more natural on a book like *Hulk* or *Thor*, something where there are big guys with big shoulders and big action. That's the kind of stuff that I've always loved to do and wanted to do. I also think there's a big change in my work when I started inking myself. There are things I can do in the inks that I can't do in the pencils, and vice versa. That changed my artwork a lot, just going from one to another.

...on his childhood drawings.

I really wanted to print a drawing I did of The Dragon as a kid. I haven't been able to find one that's old enough. There are some drawings that I did when he had the funky fin prior to *Megaton*, but I was looking for one that was the Speed Racer-meets-Captain Marvel-meets-Batman one. I don't have any anywhere, and I haven't run across anybody who's got any. I guess they don't embarrass me, because I keep trotting them out. If I thought they were that horrible, I'd bury them in the backyard.

...on the contrast between light-hearted and dark in *Savage Dragon*.

I think the book is somewhat light, but I also think there's some heavy shit that goes on in this comic. I mean, the first



issue of The Dragon's book as a regular series, that's not really boffo yocks! There is some pretty rude stuff in there, and every now and then I'll go and I'll step way over the bounds of what I think is good taste. I'll usually do the stuff and then see it in print and go, oh man! [Like some] of the gory stuff in the first issue, where people are going at it too much and there's a lot of blood flying around. There was a scene in issue three where somebody's face got shot in half, and I was like, that seems a little bit excessive. But then I'll keep doing it.

...on the language and violence in the book.

I don't think I'm introducing any words to any kids. I don't say anything in my comic that you can't say on television. Probably a little bloodier than you see in [other] comics, but no more so than a lot of movies that kids get into. I don't really think I've stepped over ... well, maybe once or twice. (cackle) I did a scene with Jimbo the Lobster and I had him swearing in signs because I was actually uncomfortable having him say the words.

...on upcoming events in *Savage Dragon*.

I'm doing my first real continued story, which is something I haven't done before. All of the things I've done so far have been kind of episodic. I've got these little leech deals that attach themselves to people's necks, and one of them attaches themself to The Dragon, of all people. In the midst of it we get him going after the police force. Suddenly, he is the evil entity that needs to be stopped. Guest-stars galore and all that fun stuff. I don't know who they are yet ... I would like to do Dragon versus Pitt somewhere along the line. I would also like to do Dragon meeting Spawn, which Todd would like to do, too. We're probably going to do this as a crossover deal. I've kind of not been doing that in *The Dragon* book. The first ten issues, I don't think I even mentioned the other comics. I mentioned *Youngblood* in issue #10. None of them have been seen on-panel in the entire regular series yet. I'm definitely wanting to get a little more play in with the other image characters, because I haven't really been doing that. I'm too busy playing with Megaton Man and all those other guys. Teaming up with Bombast, I couldn't be bothered to run across Spawn.

...on why The Dragon makes so many guest appearances.

Because I can be talked into anything!



...on The Dragon as a studmuffin.

I don't know if I pull it off, but he's supposed to be a really good looking guy. He's big as hell, he's in something of a position of power, and he's looked at as being a hero. He's always saving people's lives. You've got this big, handsome, heroic guy. I mean, there are people in the book who don't react to him that way. It wasn't supposed to be one of those things like a power. It's sort of like I'd imagine if you were Mel Gibson walking around.



...on why he releases so little product compared to Homage or Extreme.

I'm one guy working out of my room! I don't have a big studio. I have an assistant who comes and types in letters and fills in blacks and erases pages, and that's it. The rest of it is me.

...on the *Savage Dragon* animated series.

Don't hold your breath.

...on licensed products.

It's pretty small just because I'm a one-man outfit. I haven't pursued it that much. I don't really know yet. Todd has been bugging me about wanting to do a Dragon toy. I would like Todd to do a Dragon toy. It's just a matter of being able to secure the rights for him to do that. I would like him to do it because he does the coolest toys. If they can do a Dragon that looks like I drew him, let's go! There's a lot of stuff that will happen. It's just a matter of signing the papers and getting things done.

...on enjoying *Savage Dragon*.

I'm having tremendous fun with it. [Yet] I can take it seriously at the same time. I think it's important that you have a character with a certain amount of flexibility to it.

...on the criticism of Image.

[John Byrne] will write about us, and he lumps the whole Image company together as though we've all got this group mind-think. If anybody ever bothered to sit in a room with us when we were having a meeting, they would automatically know. "These guys, what are they doing together?" We actually do like each other, but we get into these heated debates on all this different stuff. Then [Byrne] will make some blanket statement that may cover one guy in the group. Because there are six different things, it'll be like Rob said this, then Todd said this, then Jim said this—these guys can't make up their minds. Yeah, they can, but they've all got different minds. He went on with this list of what is good comics and what is bad comics, and it happened that things he had on his list of bad comics were things he routinely does. You mean you're intentionally doing bad comics? The rest of us weren't aware of this list, but we weren't aware that we were doing bad comics. But you're intentionally making bad comics for people to buy. That takes a lot of gall!



He says what's good is heroes, what's bad is vigilantes. That's wrong. That's confusing quality with subject matter. That's like saying funny animals are better than romance comics. They don't have anything to do with each other. There can be good of one, and there can be bad of one. A lot of his arguments are along that vein, where you just go, "Huh?" For someone who comes across as an intelligent person, that's a stupid thing to say.

If we were talking about someone who is a really good f------' writer, and they were going and sounding off, that would be one thing. They're going, "Damn it, I am an average writer, and my average opinion is..." and they're going, "Wow, that guy's great!" John Byrne is a good artist. Period. There are artists in the comic book community who kick his ass artistically, yet John is presenting himself as some sort of artistic authority, and he is judging Image comics and saying Image comics are bad. Sorry, John, but until you can draw as well as Marc Silvestri, I'm not buying that. You're telling me Image comics suck, and Legend comics, that's a stamp of quality. How the hell do you reconcile those things?

Peter [David] has gone to great lengths to point out [that] Rob Liefeld swiping a couple of poses, yet Peter rips off more dialogue than anyone on the planet. He's just copping little bits of commercials, and little bits of this and that. That's not writing. It does take a certain amount of creative talent to be able to pull something like that off, but that is not writing. You certainly don't go claiming that somebody else is swiping when you're doing even worse on your own.

...on whose opinions matter to him.

Anybody. Absolutely everybody. The letters, I pay attention to those. I pay attention to fans I meet in person. I pay attention to fellow comic book professionals, whoever they may be. I will gladly listen to anybody, even artists who I think are terrible, who have a different perspective on what I'm doing, like it or hate it. I'm very receptive to that. I want to learn to do what I'm doing better. These comic books are produced at such a frantic pace, and with so few checkpoints along the way, that sometimes things come out without anybody seeing it. I've had a few things wrecked. I've screwed up a few things.

What we need is for somebody occasionally to get together with all the freelancers that work for a comic company. Marvel's loaded, they can fly out a bunch of guys. They're going to teach you how to do what you're doing better. We should set up more classes for people who are already in comics on how to do comics. It will help out. It will make your comics better.

You don't get a lot of that. It's an ego thing. Nobody wants to admit they don't know what the hell they're doing. I'm constantly trying to figure out ways of improving my own artwork. I'm always experimenting with things, trying to make them better.

IMAGE HAS A NEW SUIT

BY MIKE STOKES

Image's newest director of sales and marketing is no typical corporate suit.

"To make it in the comics business, you've got to have some past in

"I think that's my strongest point, being from the fan end when I was a

that kind of a background he/she cannot lose."

In addition to his marketing duties, Smith has also taken on the writing

et smashmouth," are a lot alike.

"I think that's why Todd asked me to develop it," Smith confesses. "He

drew these pictures up and gave them names. He came up to me and he

about plain' ... you're crazy enough," he laughs.

"Tim Perkins and I developed the Bruise Crew, and Boof, you can ask anybody in my family, this is Beau Smith at 15.

Boof, who landed on Earth a few months ago, is learning Earthling culture from a 10-year-old named Nick and his mischievous dog, Buddy. Buddy, preying on Boof's temper and ignorance, tricks him into all sorts of things including trying a delicacy known as "yard fudge" and several other disgusting, but hilarious things that have to be seen to be believed.

A warrior by nature, Boof sees everything as acts of war, saving kids from "prison camp" school buses and jack-o-lanterns as disembodied heads of warriors who were unsuccessful in extorting candy from houses.

The misguided mohawked alien with huge tusks and hockey stick in hand, somehow blends in among the neighbors, who seem to think he's an exchange student from Brazil, opening the door for hilarious misadventures and mayhem.



A JIM LEE TELLS US BREAK WHAT HIS CREATIONS FROM WILL POSSIBLY DO THE WITHOUT HIM STORM DURING HIS BREAK.



by Steve Spaulding

Father. Entrepreneur. Artist. Each one of them is a full-time job, and Jim Lee has to work all of them. There really needs to be more hours in the day—or else a few more copies of him. How does he handle it? Massive talent, professionalism, old-fashioned common sense, and very little sleep. Lee was just back from the Chicago Comic Convention where he had been wearing his business-representative hat, tired as a dog, and coming down with what sounded like a nasty cold. But he still managed to muster the energy to flip into interviewee mode and talk about some of the great projects coming out of Wildstorm Studios, what 1994 will mean to the industry in 1995, and his long-awaited, much deserved vacation.

The past two years have been busy ones for Lee. Since his break from Marvel and the founding of Image studios he's only been making more work for himself. On the business



ame of things, Lee consolidated all his projects into his own studio, Aegis. The name, borrowed from Greek mythology didn't have quite the right ring to it, and it was changed to Wildstorm. The name it bears today. On the artist side of things he was busy penciling and plotting books like *WildC.A.T.s*, *Gen 13*, and *Deathblow*, in the studio is the place where art and business connect. "When I first started in the industry, I wasn't much of a businessman, I just had a good head for business. I was good at math in college, and a lot of people think that being good with numbers makes you good with money. But it's more a matter of being able to recognize a good deal when you see it, being able to see an opportunity and run with it." While he hesitates to call himself a mentor, Lee does feel that part of his role as head honcho of Wildstorm is helping young creators do their best work, and achieve the most success they can with it. "I hope that with some of the newer people [in the industry] I can show them how their work can be their own to do what they want with. That's what independent publishing is, that's what Image is all about."

And the family man? The family was in overdrive with two kids being born. You would expect two weeks per vacation somewhere in there, but no. "I think maybe I took nine days off at one point, but there were a lot of phone calls and faxes back and forth, and I was still working hard at home. This will be some real down-time." Lee won't commit to the amount of time he's taking off in print.

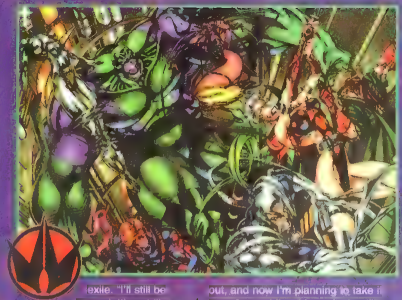


Even on vacation, the man has an agenda; he'll be gone for as long as it takes him to get rested and accomplish the things he wants to do outside of the office. So, is he off to Tahiti? Bermuda? The South of France perhaps? "Heck no! I'm staying at home. I've got to help out with the second baby!" Lee's main reason for taking the time off is fulfilling a long-standing promise to his wife to kick back and spend some time with the family.

He has other reasons as well. The first is rest, and the first few weeks of his vacation will be just that. But he is also curious to see how well his company's support structure is. After managing his business so closely for so long, he wonders how well things will run on their own. "There are a lot of artists . . . because I'm taking a hiatus, all that will do is impact *WildC.A.T.s*, and we've got the perfect talent lined up to follow me on that project." That talent will be Travis Charest, whose earlier work includes *Darkstars* for DC, and James Robinson, who made waves and got raves for writing *The Golden Age*. Robinson is set to do a two-part story, with talk about him doing even more. On *Gen 13*, Brandon Choi and Jeff Scott will be sharing the plotting chores, with Choi scripting and Scott penciling.

"The other books will continue to go on, and all of those have been well received and are doing well. I wouldn't have done this if I didn't feel confident that things could function smoothly, if not better without me. Besides, he's on vacation, not in





exile. "I'll still be around. It's not like I'm going off to my arctic fortress of solitude ... I'll still be coming in, I'll be on the phone a lot. (But) more in terms of talking to people about story ideas than sitting down and actually drawing."

Taking a break from the drawing means taking a break from the hectic pace that comes with putting out the books on time, and concentrating instead on the art itself. "Ideally, when you're working on a monthly book you want to spend a week plotting, another week soliciting, handling the business side of things, and then a week getting it printed, which leaves you with a week to get the actual drawing done. Well, the truth is that the drawing alone can take four weeks all by itself. So you find yourself getting all the business work and all the other stuff done around the drawing, finding the time, making the time. And doing the art ... because it's the thing you're most in control of, it can become, I don't want to say automatic, but maybe systematic. And I don't want that ... I don't want to get stale or stuck in a rut. So many artists, and good artists, just find a way of doing something and they do it over and over. I wonder about things like buildings. Am I always drawing buildings the same way? Is there something more that I can do to make it better? I always need to be challenging myself."

Lee feels his art needs to be in a constant state of improvement and refinement. Most of that just comes from doing the work. "Sitting down to draw every day is one of the things I had to work at when I was starting out, and now I'm planning to take it easy for a while—I hope I can still draw when I get back!" he jokes. The other side is careful observation, and trying to deliberately incorporate a new technique or style into his repertoire, like his revolutionary work on *Deathblow*.

Lee is also steadily expanding his role as a creator into writing, having plotted books such as *WildC.A.T.s* and *Deathblow*. "Well, let's give credit where credit is due. All the scripting falls to Brandon Choi, who is just amazing. I've been doing a lot of plotting, and I feel that the more I work at it the better I get. In some ways it's a lot like drawing; you really have to work at it every day, and then get it out there where people can see it. If you just leave it at home and never show your rough drafts, you're never going to get any better. I feel I've gotten better at pacing, at shifting between down-time and action scenes, working up to a climax, and just working with the characters." But while he feels plotting is an important role of his in the production of a book, and gives him greater control as an artist of what he ends up drawing, he has yet to script a book on his own.

That's one of the things I'm really looking forward to, but I don't feel I'm ready yet. Actually putting your words in the mouths of characters, it's really a matter of finding your own voice." With a little luck, Lee will soon have all the skills he needs to do an entire book solo. And wouldn't that be even more work? "Well," he laughs, "it's never been the amount of work, it's been finding the time."

So much of the work Lee will be doing on vacation will be idea work, tossing around new projects, experimenting with his art, maybe having a go at scripting—perhaps even talking with some people about doing a *WildC.A.T.s* movie. But strange enough, while Lee feels the constant need to evaluate where he is as an artist and creator, he seldom feels the need to look back at what he's accomplished in the past. "I never look at back issues ... I'm not sure why, I just never have. You know, when I'm at the cons and kids bring the books up to be signed, I'll flip through them, but I never have really sat down with a stack of back issues.

I don't know, maybe I should. And what are some of the projects he'll be doing when he gets back? Lee isn't talking. "Some of them are in the planning stages, and some of them are still in the thinking stages, but I have two or three projects that I'm talking about right now. In fact, just when I decided I was going to take some time off, one idea instantly came to mind, and I've been spending some time developing that. So, whatever it will be, it will be big, and it will be a little different from what I'm doing now." Lee is so enthusiastic he sounds as if he's ready to get back before he's even left. "I want to get out there and draw my monthly book again.

Even if his personal projects were still in the planning stages, he was still able to give *HERO* the lowdown on a lot of new things coming out of Image in general and Wildstorm in particular. And the big noise over there is being made by animation. A new *WildC.A.T.s* animated cartoon will be coming out on CBS Saturday morning, September 17, at 10 a.m. Lee has been involved in licensing,



oping and developing the series ay one. Like self-publishing, he the move into animation both as enge and a proving ground. " orded the WildC.A.T.s project eginning to end, and through hole process of getting it on TV, eas *Batman* and *X-Men*, it's all by executives tors. The cre- hose books involved at all. ll be interesting s that makes a nce at all. er it is worth- to have the cre- involved in the s or not." le news of the ct sent the con- circuit abuzz.

September. re just starting ction) overseas, ere isn't much to Just model right now, actu- lot of work has into them. There mething like four sepa- model sheets for each cter, and they have to them in their differen- ons, moods, and in their ms and civilian clothes. en there are things like nsby and backgrounds ly a lot of work." Lee d on about six of the sheets himself, trying to each one a guide to the style s.

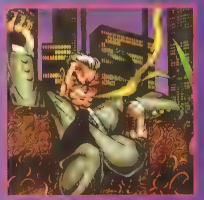
urally, there are things you can a comic book that can't be done aturday morning. "We're going ore of a G or PG rating. The book I would say is more of a G rating. We're adapting some of stories from the comics to fit into minute format, so the pacing is to be different. Plenty of action, t as much violence. People will s, but not hurt so badly. What hoping for in the series is thing for kids that adults and of the comic can get into as well. , character driven stories with a look to them and plenty of

tly, Rob Liefeld pulled plans ducing a Youngblood cartoon because of conflicts with the k censors. But these are problems that Lee hasn't run into. Everyone here at CBS has just been great. I think some of Rob's troubles were, and you would really have to talk to him about this because I don't know for sure, were that he was trying to get CBS to do things in a way that they had never done before. He wanted what was in the comic book to be what you saw on television, and you really have to adapt your work to suit the medium you're working in. Tailor it to fit the audience, I guess. Like, say, with Zealot. Zealot looks fine the way she looks in the comic, but in a Saturday morning cartoon, they look at it and say, 'Gosh, her costume looks like it's riding a little high up her thigh. And I look at it and say, 'You're right, in a cartoon it does look a little stupid for her to be running around in a G-string.' The same way if we were making it into a *WildC.A.T.s* live-action movie a four-foot long pony tail would look strange."

Keeping with his reputation of being one of the easiest people to work with in the industry, Lee prefers to be flexible, and look at *WildC.A.T.s* more as a core concept than as something set in stone. "(Like in) the *Batman* movies. To have the Joker kill Bruce Wayne's parents makes much more sense. It makes much more sense for the main villain to establish himself, to have it just be Joe Chill, a minor character who wouldn't show up for the rest of the film. And with Catwoman, I think the costume for the movie looks great. It might not fly in a comic book, however.

As an illustration of how a core concept can move from medium to medium in a great big circle, a new book will be coming out called *WildC.A.T.s Adventures*, that will take the WildC.A.T.s as they appear in the animated cartoon and bring them back to comics. Written by Jeff Mariotte and penciled by Ty Templeton, the man behind much of the success of *Batman Adventures*. "I'm really looking forward to it," says Lee, "because it has a different style and a different tone than most Image books. And I think it will probably appeal to a slightly different age group." A lot of the praise for the *Batman Adventures* book has called it a return to an earlier, "classic" Batman. It will be interesting to see how the WildC.A.T.s return to a classic look—that they never had before.

As enthusiastic as Lee is about his own animation project, he's also happy about Sam Kieth's The Maxx making the transition to celluloid on MTV. For him, it proves that the Image philosophy and way of doing business works. "I mean ... Image was founded by six guys, the founding fathers, and we've had success in getting deals put together, but Maxx is something that came in after we started Image, and we said, 'Here's the deal: you create the book, and you own it, you run it, you license it yourself.' And he's been able to get something off the ground on his own. And I think



more of it will happen in the future, where a creator can come to image and say, "Here's the book I want to do, get the deal with image where they get most of the responsibility for putting out the book and most of the money, and retain all the rights to do whatever they want with that character, that concept. Whether it be a movie or a cartoon or whatever or nothing. Hopefully more of that will happen."

Returning to the world of comic books, there are plenty of plans in the works for expanding the reader's view of the image Universe, and Wildstorm a corner of it. Glimpses of the past, hints of the future, and closer looks through different eyes at your favorite characters are all coming out in the months ahead.

Before he goes on vacation Lee will have to survive image *X Month*, like the rest of the image creators. In September, they will all be switching books, and the readers will have to guess who is working on which title. According to Lee, the idea started with a brainstorming session, and Todd McFarlane. They were talking about the possibility of doing a studio-wide crossover, something like *Crisis on Infinite Earths* from DC or *Secret Wars* from Marvel. But it's image, so they decided to do things differently. "Todd said something about the real strength of image being its creative lineup, and that the people who should really be doing the crossing over were the writers and artists. The idea kind of went from there." In some cases, space was cleared in the story lines for the guest talent to work in, and other books have a convenient niche to work in, but some creators are going to walk into the middle of a story line and have to deal with it. Which is fine with them. "There's a lot of good feeling around the studio, and a healthy sense of competition. It should make things exciting ... the freedom to explore the potential of other characters, to work with new interpretations. You look at something like Superman or Batman, where they've been around for years and years. It's only the fresh blood, the chance for someone to take a new look that keeps them alive. It's a real testament to the strength of a character that it can stand up to reinterpretation."

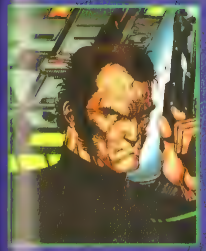
Another book that takes a new look at characters that have been around for a while is *Team 7*, a new miniseries coming out of Wildstorm. Written by Chuck Dixon and drawn by Aaron Wiesenfeld, it goes back to the pre-superhero days of the toughest characters in Wildstorm—Deathblow, Grifter, Backlash and Lynch to name a few. "This is when they all worked together, and were the biggest, baddest soldiers of the various four branches of the United States armed services, and they were brought together in this sort of super-secret assault team. And it chronicles how they start out as patriots and were betrayed by their own government now they all got super-powers and the fall-out of that happening to them. It really kind of fills the gaps of the *Gen 13* and *Kindred* miniseries." Look for intense action on the level of a modern-day Nick Fury and his Howling Commandos, with plenty of spy and superhero elements thrown in.

If *Team 7* sounds familiar, it should. It's the predecessor to Team 8, the group of soldiers that went on to become the symbiotic-stars of Whilce Portacio's *Wetworks*, which has made a big splash at Wildstorm and will be back for another run. "*Wetworks* will probably be advanced to a regular series. It's performed very well as a miniseries, and Whilce has always had this long-term plan of taking the characters where they're really these guys with symbiotic organisms enveloping them, and having them advance and become more like superheroes. So it's really going to be an advancement, or an evolution of the concept, which is what we've wanted from day one."

Whilce Portacio is already signed on to do six more issues of mayhem. Continuity between *Wetworks* and *Team 7* will be tight, and hopefully lead to more future/past stories. Dane, who leads Wetworks was also with Team 7, and he was the only guy to stay with the government on that level. Lynch used to lead Team 7, and now he's the director of International Operations ... After *Gen 13* is over, Lynch will learn more about his past and decide to leave his position. Dane, who is just a tough soldier in Team 7 chooses to stay on and becomes the leader of Team 8 and then takes his team rogue when they become superheroes. We're dealing with these characters in the present and in the past ... so you're seeing snippets of these characters from a lot of different time lines, without time travel.

If your taste for backstory hasn't been satisfied yet, you'll just have to wait for *Wildstorm Year One*. That's only a working title at the moment, given to capture the idea of the series. "That's being written by James Robinson and Steven Seagle, and they're going to be focusing on the early years of *WildC.A.T.s* and *Stormwatch*." The series is scheduled for early spring in two four-part miniseries.

Yet another look at a different time line, this time with the act of time travel, is the premise behind issue 25, a



at the future of select
e and Wildstorm books. This
peek at things to come pre-
a challenge for those telling the
making all the pieces fit. "We'll
ow we can make it all fit and
seemlessly by having it eventu-
k up to *Stormwatch* #25 ... to
it's satisfying to creators to work
r in advance and really be stuck
e and point and have to get

prospering views of the past
future seem to be on a pretty
scale, not to worry, there are a
r of miniseries coming out to
ight your favorite WildC.A.T.s up
and personal. We have minis-
that are focusing on Voodoo,
, Spartan and Grifter at this point
we're not going to announce
or officially promote them until
ve the books in hand. Zealot
ave to be content with appearing
-up stories, but Lee would like
her someday in a miniseries all
n. "That's something I'd like to

er projects are still in the idea
One idea might take a look at
k black thread that runs
much of the image Universe,
uper-spy network, international
ations. "In a lot of our books we
the government being the villain
makes more sense. It's more
porary, it's more realistic. The
a guy who wants to take over
nd single-handedly, it's prepos-
"How would that work?"
egular people, getting
within the government, working
racy with unlimited funds, to me
ns you up to a lot of corrup-
nd real villainy." While
ational Operations have indeed
o the bad guys in a number of



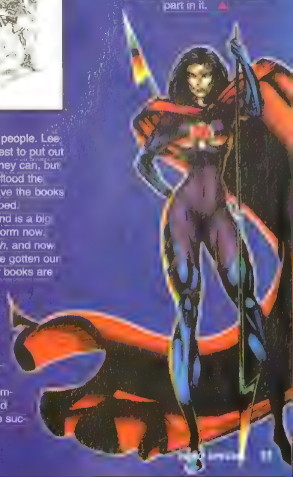
tiles, the organization has possibili-
ties of its own. "It might be interesting
just to do a book on how does this
government agency affect *WildC.A.T.s* and *Stormwatch* and all these differ-
ent characters, and maybe focusing
on that. Maybe do sort of a Nick Fury
kind of book, but a little differently.
Make it a little more contemporary, a
little more accessible."

As if it wasn't enough, there are al
the non-comic related *WildC.A.T.s* merchandise. Along with the animated
series, and the new comic series
there are card sets (to follow up
Wildstorm set one) and some other
painted sets. There is a new line of
WildC.A.T.s toys coming out from
Playmates, and even video games for
Sega and Nintendo. Even if they
weren't putting out a single comic, the
artists at Wildstorm would be busy
doing promotional work. As it is, they

are a very busy bunch of people. Lee
and Co. are doing their best to put out
the highest quality work they can, but
to do things logically, not flood the
market, and above all, have the books
in hand, ready to be shipped.

Having the books in hand is a big
part of business at Wildstorm now.
"The year 1993 was *rough*, and now
it's behind us. In '94 we've gotten our
shipping act together, our books are
coming out
more on
time, they're selling well
again, and we are now
having mainstream pro-
jects, much like the big
two companies ... all with-
in the span of two years.
So I'm proud of the accom-
plishments we've had, and
hopefully we'll have some suc-
cess this year."

The year 1993 was more than a rough year for Wildstorm, it was a rough year all around, and Lee is glad to see his company weather the storm. "It seems like we're back on stable footing a little bit, in terms of retailer's health and what they're ordering. So that's good to see. Although it might change over the summer, it's still up in the air a little bit, but I think it's more long-term than that. I think it's good that we've gotten through this whole speculation cycle, because it seems like they're now ordering books based on story lines, based on what's in-between the covers, which is healthy to see. The year '93 was the year of the new publishers, '94 will be I think the year of consolidation. You've already seen imprints and companies drop out of the running ... Axis, Majestic, Lightning ... I think a lot of companies are falling by the wayside, and I think you're going to see more of that as the year goes on. I think you'll see fewer distributors, probably fewer retailers. But I think that the end result will be a smaller but healthier and much stronger industry by the end of the year. And then, who knows what will happen in '95?" Whatever the future holds, Lee will be there to take part in it.





MARC SILVESTRI

CYBER FORCE

Although Marc Silvestri was the last member of Image Comics to join up, there's absolutely no doubt that he's been vital to the mix. While other founders such as Erik Larsen or Todd McFarlane are louder voices within the group, and Jim Lee borders on reclusive, Silvestri has consistently been the calm and steady voice within Image. This, however, does not keep the eloquent Mr. Silvestri from speaking out with the rest of them—when he so desires...

Let's start with the most recent news: your departure from Homage Studios. What brought on that decision?

That's something that I'd been kicking around because so many things have been going on for me up in the Los Angeles area. To be honest with you, a two-hour drive one-way for a 45-minute, hour-long meeting was getting ridiculous. I'd waste an entire work day just to go have lunch with somebody.

What are you going to do with your own studio?

I'll pretty much run it not that differently from Homage. Homage always consisted of two companies, really: Jim['s] and mine. Things aren't going to [be] that much different except for the [fa]ct that there are going to be fewer [peo]ple for a little while until it grows up [a]gain. We're actually doing an aggressive talent search, finding new people, people who want to get into comics.

What are you looking for?

Everything–artists, writers, even administrative people who are interested in getting into comics that maybe don't have artistic skills, but they have skills in other areas that we can use in comics. We're looking at all submissions for all things. Like Homage, we [focu]s on making this the world's best place to work. The studio situation's always a lot of fun for people. We take care of business there, but there's a lot of camaraderie, a lot of friendships are made. That's probably



the worst thing about leaving Homage Studios proper; there are a lot of friendships that you're used to seeing on a day-to-day basis.

Now that you're splitting off on your own, you're going to be the mentor, the veteran of experience for everyone.

What I'm experienced at, I haven't quite figured out yet. I'm drawing from a lot of years of experience both as a publisher. I know I [have] learned a lot of things the hard way, and I wish there had been someone looking over my shoulder sometimes. We've got a couple of guys in the studio right now that we're working with; pretty soon they'll have their own books. That is going to be a great source of pride, to know that when people come to the studio they're pretty raw. You work with them, and it's like graduation day when they're ready and their project is out on the stands. The youthful energy is great too. The people that we bring in are usually in their early 20s. There's a lot of excitement and energy in there, and it just kind of permeates the entire work area and everyone has more fun and is excited. That's an aspect of this







When you started, did you intend to reach the point where you could do your own creations?

Back then, very few people were striking out on their own. Guys like Neal Adams were pioneers as far as leaving the mainstream and self-publishing, but it wasn't really in vogue back then. As far as your average artist was concerned, it was a dumb move. The market and atmosphere in comics just wasn't ready for that sort of thing. In business I never thought I'd be involved in, but I'm welcoming it with open arms.

What project did you start in this industry with?

I was with DC doing those books that nobody even looks at, like *House of Mystery*. They always put new guys on that because they always screw up and nobody pays attention anyway, because nobody sees those things. It's a great place to learn. I like to think that everything I've worked at I've learned something from, whether it's good or bad. Then I went to Marvel, a year after that. Jim Shooter gave me my first job over there, I think it was *Conan the Barbarian*. I'd been with Marvel ever since, until Image started.

fact, if I can be so bold, the market wasn't ready for that sort of thing all the way up until Image did it. So back then I didn't think at all that I ever would be in this position. I was really starting to feel kind of burned out about comics. I was just thinking, geez, it would be nice if I could own some of this stuff and have some control over it. I was not only thinking about getting out of comics, but if I stayed in comics doing my own little self-publishing thing and not letting people get on my case. I never really took it that seriously until Todd approached me with the idea for Image Comics. I went, hey, perfect timing.

How did it feel during the transition between deciding to do it and actually following through? There had to be a few sleepless nights in there.



Image happened too fast–when the news hit about the seven of us leaving at the same time and starting our own common company, and the perfect timing with the speculators being in the market, the popularity of artists on their books was never higher. I think a lot of the people who are trying to do their own publishing now are kind of missing the point as to why Image succeeded when it did. It happened so fast that I think most of us weren't really prepared for it. Most of us were still working for Marvel Comics and we still had commitments when we left. Suddenly, we're Image Comics and we need to have something out there, fast. There was a real rush to finish up commitments with Marvel and start up a publishing company all at the same time. Actually, the first year it was pretty hectic. I think that a lot of people saw the end result of that with a lot of missed shipping on the books. We bit off a lot. Maybe we choked on some of that, but I think people can see now that we've got all those bugs worked out





How do you feel about the fact that some people won't let go of their misconceptions about Image?

There are a lot of people out there who would like to see us fail, which is really strange. No press can resist negative press. That's the flashier stuff that sees print; people who speak negatively, who have a forum that allows them to print whatever they decide. There are people out there who just want to paint a negative picture of everything, especially if something is working that they're not involved in. We get amazing amounts of positive mail and positive response from retailers when you meet with them. That far outweighed the negative.

I think most people only gave Image a year.

The funny thing is that whenever you read a lot of the negative press and stuff like that, all we would do is get together at a meeting and say, "We're bugging these people." As long as we're in business and keep bugging them, we're going to be happy. There are certain people in the industry at certain companies that we just enjoy bugging. The best way that we can bug them is by being in business. That solidarity, that purpose has held us together through some tough times in the industry. But we're not a bunch of idiots. We were prepared for when the industry was going to go down, which it did. In fact, Larry Marder and the guys, we almost came up with the exact month when sales would begin to drop. We were playing that really cool. We just sat back quietly and prepared for what we knew was going to be an industry-wide lull as the speculators got out of the racket, which I think is healthy for everybody. I mean, nobody's happy to see numbers drop–that's money out of our pocket–but we all believe that it was healthy for the industry. All those numbers that were industry-wide were just artificially inflated. The ones who played it smart and carefully, they're still in business, and I think they're stronger because of it. I know we are. I think we've never been a stronger company than we are right now. I think we've proven to the readers and the retailers alike that yeah, we're getting these books out now, and we're probably giving them the best product in the marketplace. There's not another company out there that puts more into their books than we do. We have more respect for our readers. I think we give them more comic for the money than anyone else has in the past I don't know how many years. It's hard to do business that way, as far as thinking in terms of making a buck. There are a lot ways that we could throw books out there and people would still buy them, but every single one of those books out there has our name on it, and we're all very proud of them. So we're careful and we put out the best books that we possibly can.

Your work seems to have improved dramatically, especially since beginning the ongoing series.

Like everything else, it's been a learning process. The books that you'll be reading in the future are even better. I think that now that we've got a lot of these scheduling snafus out of the way, we can concentrate even more on better stories and better art. Like I said before, our names are on these books, and that means a lot to us. We're not just a giant, faceless corporation that just tosses things out. We all put our heart and soul into every one of these.

Your brother is your partner with this, isn't he?

He helps me with the writing on these things and writes the *Cyberforce* stuff. As a policy right now, any characters that he creates with me, we split the ownership on. That's policy for anyone that comes in and does work for me. That's a policy that I not only feel proud to offer freelancers, but it allows freelancers to be more creative. I think that when you create an atmosphere that allows a freelancer or a creative individual to really free his mind and not worry about his future, or the future of his characters, you get all kinds of wonderful ideas coming out of the

What elements do you like to have in your stories?

I'm kind of an adrenaline junkie when it comes to story content. But I also enjoy the character development stuff, now that we don't have the constraints of a miniseries anymore. That's the addictive quality of comic books, the same as it is with soap operas. You have to care about the people that are in these books. Not only does it make



good stories, but it also makes good sense as far as if you want to sell comic books. These people eventually just start to take on a life of their own within your head, and the ideas come flying out. When you're actually feeling depressed about what you're going to do to a character, you've got something going there. When you get to that point as a creator, you can just imagine how the reader's



going to feel when they read about what's happening to their favorite heroine or hero. I love drawing the big splash pages, and drawing things that are exploding or being zapped. But when you're drawing a panel and you've got the character development going on, and you know there's something gut-wrenching going on in this character's mind, and you put that expression on the face, there's something special about that too. That's probably the most intimate part of creating comic books. That's a rush as well as drawing the big, splashy panels.

The biggest standout of the group appears to be Ripclaw.

I'm not going to deny any influences, but it's a character that I love drawing. As far as being an American Indian character, I've got a great deal of respect and admiration for the American Indian culture. Maybe putting one in as a superhero is not going to make much of a dent anywhere, but it's my way of showing a little respect to a people who have not been shown a lot of respect. We're going to explore a lot of his past, a lot of his background, a lot of stuff that happened before Cyberdata, his past history, and the fact that he has powers that are attributed to a shaman. We've kind of put him in the forefront in a lot of ways. He's one we're going to make sure we handle carefully and not fumble the ball.

You seem to have the freedom to try whatever you like at Image.

We still have the luxury of being strong sellers. I think once the market did correct itself down to the core readers, and not the people who were buying a hundred copies of every book, things leveled off and we're still very strong. By all accounts, we're not the biggest publisher, because we don't publish all that many books, but I think it's safe to say we're the most popular publisher with a lot of readers. People really seem to enjoy the stuff that we're putting out there, and I think that's in direct relation to the fact that we enjoy doing it. I think that quality is catchy. People like to jump onto that train and be part of it. They want to read the excitement that we're putting into these books.

How do you feel about the fact that you are such a fan-favorite artist?

There was a point in my career where I couldn't pay someone to stand in front of my table as I was doing sketches, and there was a time when I hardly had time to sign autographs for everyone that was waiting there, especially when all the Image guys get together and we're all in one place at the same time. I like that way better! Comics are a lot of hard work, any time you have to force the creative juices to

flow to meet a deadline, there's a mental battle going on in your head all day long. I tell you, there's nothing that feels better than someone telling you how much they appreciate what you're doing. It's my privilege to sign a book for somebody who's big into what I'm doing. No matter how many autographs I'll sign in a sitting, every one of those autographs is important to me. I wish that there could be a perfect combination of the old way and the new way, in the sense that these days it's really impossible to just sit and talk to someone for any length of time, a reader that just wants to sit and talk comics with you. I don't mind talking to people at all. I'm not one of those guys who goes, ah, don't bother me. I appreciate everyone who even wants to take the time to hand me their book for me to sign. Like I said, I've been on the other side of the fence, and that was no fun. This is great, and it's nice to get a little piece of appreciation after a long deadline job that you've had to do and you're just fried out from putting in 80-hour work weeks.



Who do you look up to in the industry?

I'm kind of from the old school, in the sense that my influences are guys like John Buscema. Of course Jack Kirby, but I think Jack Kirby kind of transcends. Whether or not people know it, he's everyone's influence. There's Kirby in everything. I follow guys like John Buscema, who I still think is the best artist who ever graced comic books as far as raw talent, being able to draw the human figure. I don't think there's anyone that's ever come close to him. Jack Kirby for his sheer energy and imagination. People like Walt Simonson, again, he's in the Kirby vein in the sense that, boy, he can make things jump off a page. I used to love looking at the Bernie Wrightson stuff; I still do. Bernie was a big influence early on. Early on, Neal Adams was an influence. Contemporaries, people I'm influenced by now are obviously people like Jim, and guys like Todd. There's not a lot of Todd in my work, but a lot of his energy. I really enjoy looking at his books. So my influences are mostly old school, Frazetta and them, and I've brought whatever I learned from them into my influences from modern-day artists. I'm always working on blends of that stuff. Issue by issue I discover something new. To this day, after 13 years, I'm still learning. The day I stop learning something new, or I stop learning new tricks, or a new way of doing things, a new way of looking at things, that's the day I'd better get out of comics. That's the addictive part of the creative process, I think, for most people, is the fact that there's always a new horizon, every week, every day.

How did you feel about being able to hire one of your influences, Walt Simonson, to work on *Cyberforce* #0?

That was a real thrill. I was really scared, because I'd met Walt, and Walt's just a prince of a guy. Still, calling up to say he's a nice guy and I love his work and calling to say, "How would you like to do something?" are two different things. I was just scared to death to call him. Finally I did, and to my surprise he said yes. That's the most flattering thing anybody's ever said to me, was the fact that someone like Walt Simonson would actually want to work with me. I was just on Cloud Nine for weeks after that. It was a great working experience with him, and I think as most people will say the end result on *Cyberforce* #0 was great. It's a proud addition to my collection of comics. That was worth it for me. I'd love to work with John Buscema, too. I don't know if we could do that, but like I said, he's my biggest influence. That'd be an honor to have him do anything–a pin-up, a trading card, I don't care!

That's another neat thing about Image, is that you guys are willing to try anything.

We're having a great time. We're a bunch of wacky guys. We're just in this huge toy box, and there's all this stuff that we can play with. Todd's got this goofy drag racer he calls the Spawnmobile. We have a giant inflatable Ripclaw guy around. There's all these goofy things that we can do. Rob's got a spaceship, and we've got a Cyber-cycle coming out. There's a bunch of costumed characters that will be coming out over the next couple months. It's just wacky fun, enjoyable stuff to do. These are things that we're making because I want to play with them. People buy them and dig them, but I want to play with them!

How do you feel now that your characters are being licensed into so many forms–toys, games, etc.?

Again, that's an aspect 10 years ago I never though I'd be dealing with. It's fun, because here's the chance to see stuff that you've created splashed everywhere. You get a kick out of it when some big licensing company calls you and says, "We'd like to this with your characters." Anything that my name is associated with, I want it to be the best that we can possibly make it. You want to make sure you're not going to work with this fly-by-night group of people that's going to toss something out that looks like crap. It's something that I never thought I'd be dealing with in the comic business: interesting and powerful people in other media. It's kind of a kick.

What's been the high point of your career?

It would have to be the decision to go with the Image project. It was a tough decision only in the sense that it was a risky decision. I knew the decision right away, that it was going to be "yes" when I talked to Todd about Image. I knew right there it was going to be, let's put our heads down and take the helmets off and go charging into a wall. That was very exciting, but it was also a nervous time. We thought, if we sell this many books, we can survive. But there's always a chance we weren't going to sell that many books. Like I said before, the timing was perfect and people were receptive to it. Much to the chagrin of Marvel, I think we brought a lot of people with us. I fully thought that they figured we'd be knocking back on their door within six months. Fortunately, that was two and a half years ago and Image is here to stay. Even if it failed, I would probably say that was the highlight simply because I'm proud of the fact that it was a very bold move, to walk away from a regular paycheck and take that risk.

Larry Marder expressed an opinion that you hold the future of the comics industry in your hands, that the success or failure of Image would define what creators would be capable of doing. What is your opinion on that?

That's melodramatic as that sounds–and talk this for what it's worth from one of the guys–he's not really that far from the truth. When we started Image, aside from just creator rights and owning our own stuff, that was one of our goals–and a lot of our naysayers are going to say you guys are full of it. But there's an idea that we had among ourselves. We weren't trying to impress anybody. There was nobody else there; it was just the seven of us at that time saying, one of the best things that we could be doing is that if Image succeeds, this will be a better place for freelancers everywhere. We weren't thinking in terms of people coming and working for Image. We were thinking that if we pulled this off, and this worked, this would benefit *everybody*. That's something that a lot of our naysayers don't want to hear. One of the biggest goals that we had was to make comics a better environment for freelancers everywhere, even for the people that we had left. Even the naysayers, the people that were publishing against us. It worked. Even people who work for larger companies, it resulted in larger page rates. Other companies started giving people creator-owned projects, giving people better deals and say-so in their projects. That's a great source of pride for us. As long as Image is around, it stands for that ideal. It stands for the rights of creators. As long as we're successful, there will be a better environment for creators out there. I think you'll see a better environment because competition is higher. If you want to compete with us, you'll have to make better comic books, and you'll have to pay people better money. The guy that benefits from that, I think, is the reader. Consequently, they're going to get a better grade of comic book. We welcome competition against us. I think we always will be unique, because the timing that we were in and the marketplace as it was I don't think will be repeated. You'll never have the situation in this industry as when Image was formed. I don't think you'll ever have that kind of hysteria again, the perfect combination of who was involved and the money that was flying around the marketplace. We're the ones who have to do that. That's one of the things that keeps us motoring right along, is the fact that we stand for something. We don't want to screw that up.



What can we look forward to in *Cyberforce*?

More characters as far as new Cyberforce members, reserve members, people going in and out of the story line. Impressive villains–we have a lot of supervillains coming up. We're going to have a high-adventure cosmic-scale type book for the next year. A lot of high adventure, a lot of character development with that. We have a book called *The Darkness* coming out, which is a single character book written by Ann Nocenti. We have another book coming out called *Weapon Zero*, which is another team book. That's drawn by Joe Benitez, who is working on the Cyblade origin book. We'll be putting out an origin book four times a year on different characters in Cyberforce; the first one is Cyblade. It also looks like Walt [Simonson] is going to be writing [*Weapon Zero*]. It'll be great to work with him on a regular basis and not just a one-shot. I can't wait! We also have a *Ripclaw* special which is going to be written by myself and drawn by Jordan Raskin, a double sized book. That's followed by a *Ripclaw* miniseries that's being drawn by Brandon Peterson. Then after that's done, [Brandon and I] are going to work on a creator-owned project together. We have sourcebooks coming up.

What's something that nobody has ever let you say?

I'm enjoying myself now more than I ever have. That's because my work is a positive influence on my life. This is something that I think a lot of people should strive for, because it makes you happy. It just happens that I was successful at comics, but if I could do it, I'd just publish these things on my own without being successful, because there's a great deal of satisfaction that creating something for yourself that other people can relate to, and other people can enjoy that just gives you a lot of peace in your life. There's a big piece of the creator in there. When you have someone say, "Hey, I like your work." it's like saying, "Hey, I like you."

I have a wonderful soulmate in Cynthia. I don't know what I would do without her. She's been amazingly patient. To all creators out there, if you find someone who has that patience, for god's sake don't *ever* let that person go. She loves me and she puts up with all the crapola that I have to put up with, she goes through it as well.

I guess just to summarize everything, thanks to everybody out there for the nice letters that they've sent, and thanks for buying my books. Because of them, I'm a happy guy. ▲

BACK

IN

THE

GAME





WHILCE PORTACIO

WETWORKS

by John Benton

Congratulations on the debut of *Wetworks*!

Thanks! I hope you read each successive issue very carefully. The whole thing is very pre-planned, and there a lot of little things that we won't clue you into until later on. If you think about it, there are a lot of questions. Where did the suits come from? Why are the suits the way they are? What are the suits? Why do they have the suits? Who is that person in the ventilation system actually giving them the suits, and why did that person do that?

Hopefully most of the questions we've already thought of, and most of it is pre-planned. You will see things happening. You will see little clues... like certain lines that people say allude to certain things that you won't necessarily find out right away. But you will find out about them. I talked to Brandon (Choi) about this cool idea that he had. What's kind of interesting is that one of the characters is going to be leaving as of issue #6. When this other series starts up, you'll find out where she's been all this time, and



...she's there. Because you'll find ... why she's there and what she's ... n doing, then you'll find out this ...ger whole to this whole symbiont thing.

So you guys have *really* got this thought out!

It was one of the interesting things about having a full time... giving myself a full time to think about it. I started as a cool superhero idea, guys in gold suits using a lot of cool military weapons. It started with that, and then Brandon stepped in. "Well, let's do vampires and stuff." Then because both Brandon and I have active minds, both of us asked each other... well, why vampires? Where did the vampires come from? Where had the vampires been? Are they really powerful? If they are, how come they haven't taken over the world? As we answered those questions, every thing got bigger and bigger. It's actually kind of fun now, but one of the weird things is that I've got all of this stuff in my head. I know what's going to happen in issue #12, but I only on issue #4 right now. I've got all these cool things in front of me, and sometimes there's a temptation to jump over cool things #1 and 4 to get to cool thing #5 that's going to be one thing that sets it apart from the other books. On the surface, it's on ... and the cool people fight ... all over the place. You can get that just by breezing through the book looking at the pictures and stuff. But if you really, really look at each individual word and line, and think about what is actually being said, then you can enjoy it on a different sense by trying to figure out what we have in mind. What we're planning ahead.

We had the preview in *WildC.A.T.s*, and it didn't even hint at what you're doing now. Was that done before you thought all this stuff up?

That was the very first thing I did. At that point it still was just this cool idea, and it was vaguely with vampires there somewhere.

The actual first issue and the *WildC.A.T.s* preview seem like two different projects.

Like I said, it evolved from just that cool idea. That's how most of the Image line started, just as cool ideas. We kept thinking about it, and it kept expanding. That's what keeps my interest in all this.

In that sense, then, the amount of time between the conception of *Wetworks* and now may have been helpful to the book.

Exactly. I believe in trying to make the best of anything that happens. I've got all these other ideas and stuff, and instead of just popping them out there giving people impressions—like this project that Brandon thought up, another title that people ask me to do, *Blood and Iron*. That started from a black-and-white piece that we printed up pretty much a Conan-type of piece. Now, with all the stuff that I thought about with *Wetworks*, the symbiont



suits and vampires and stuff, I'm bringing that into it. That ties in with Brandon's idea of bringing this into the whole mix. I'd rather go through this process where I actually think it all out before releasing anything. I don't want to just drum up hype. As each issue of *Wetworks* goes on, you'll get deeper into it, and you'll find out that it's a bigger and bigger world. What might hurt me, in a



weird twisted way, is the fact that all those posters and pinups that you've seen give the impression that it's just this cool military book

On the other hand, it could be a pleasant surprise when word starts getting around that whatever you thought *Wetworks* was, this ain't it!

By issue #10, most of them won't even look the same as they looked in issue #3. I try to think of it as issue #1 through #3 as the miniseries, the roots, the origin, when everything starts, when these human military operatives were granted their best wish: to be able to have light armor that covers them 100 percent and doesn't get in the way at all. They go from being human to being invincible humans. There's a second phase in issues #4 through #9, where you find out those gold things are not just gold things that they got and then everything's peachy-keen from then on; they're actual live beings. You have these two life forms merging and flowing into each other. We don't know what's going to come out on the other end. Everybody gets to the transformation point by issue #10. From issue #10 on are what I like to think of as the actual superhero series itself. What's cool is that there's such heavy background that to really tell the origin and why everything happened in the order that it happened, I have issues that span a thousand years before that. What's cool about that is you will have the two distinct parts–issue #10 on, the "superhero" part, and issues #1-9, the "human military transformation/origin" part. There's so much compacted into issues #1 through #9, and so much of it that is hinted at that we don't actually show, that in a sense it leads to a nice miniseries and finding out, so, how did this really happen? Instead of just doing a miniseries because this guy's popular and making an extra buck off of that guy, there are actually hidden miniseries and hidden stories that would be kind of cool to tell.

What is the status of *Wetworks* now that you've turned it over to Wildstorm?

There are "tight-lip" clauses in there, but what I can tell you is that ... Jim [Lee], Scott Williams, and myself started out Homage Studios. We've been together for a long, long time. Because of the things that happened, and because of the delay, in that period, Jim became a company and hired all these people. Because it all came out of Homage Studios, I was there physically all the time when the separators came in, Wildstorm Effects. I'm really into computers, so I was actually part of that. My sister started out as a receptionist, and she went on to actually organize and develop Wildstorm Emporium. My brother-in-law and my other sister were in it, and Scott [Williams] inked everything of mine. All the people that I wanted to work with, if I formed my own company, would be pretty much the same people that Jim's already working with. If we set up both of these companies in San Diego, we would be chipping away at each other's company. One of [Jim's] strong points is business, and he'd already set up his business side with lawyers and stuff. My strong point is the creative side. Most of his creative people, I've already worked with on a personal level. I'm letting Jim and his business end of the company handle all the business, and all the licensing, so I don't have to worry about it. I am now art director of the whole line. *Wetworks* is the first thing I art-directed.



What does that actually mean?

Because Jim has been so busy setting up these deals, like the animation deal, he hasn't been able to physically be here. We have great separators and stuff, but we haven't had an art director with the artistic power to actually direct everything. For instance, you've seen ads come out of the house over here, and they're kind of piecemeal because different people were doing different things, and there was no real direction for everything. From now on you'll see a specific look to all our ads. You'll see specific motifs for each of the books. For each of our new books, you'll see a specific

…ertising campaign that …e be launched. I'll be tak… care of all that, because … has been so busy set… up all these deals and …g care of the actual …pany. He hasn't had the … to be here and actually …hat himself. If I'd gone …nd built my own com… I would have that one …o year down-time of …g the business per… el, finding my own sep… rs or maybe taking … some of Jim's separa… My concern would be …t the same thing, that …idn't be there all the …and control the quality …s what me and Jim are …bout, controlling the …ty of our books. Now …und of a perfect thing …e know and trust … other. I'm willing to let him … any business decision, and … willing to let me make any artis… ecision. We both benefit from it. …use now instead of just Jim …elf, which is a big entity, and …elf, which is now coming back, … both part of the same bigger … So we're talking about get… into video work and animation … computer games and stuff like …t's cool. because all of those …y interests and my hobbies … stuff

Sp…king of technology, what ca… you tell us about your work in that area?

…en into computers and into …nimation since 1986. Going …ms and stuff is actually one …ong-term goals. I think … one of the things I'm bring… o the whole mix with Jim … n't very technical … uters are just a tool for him … it's a potential for the … That's why he feels free to … art direct all that stuff, even … we get into computer games …deo work. He might even let … direct the animation thing. …ght now, you can look at the … for *Wetworks* #1, which I … myself, and the advertis… ce. Because of Olyoptics … the other people at …Storm, I think we've gotten to … nt where coloring is the …ate-of-the-art level. All of



the pencilers have pretty much got it to where this is what cool comics look like. I think the next phase is punching it in with the coloring. You can have so much control if you use Photoshop to color a page. If you really work at it, you can get a photo-realistic look. Comics have always been a field where people like special effects, like big things happening. Because of the computer processing and the control that



we have over it, we're going to start to give you "real" 3-D explosions, realistic explosions that come out the page. The possibilities and the potential are really cool, which is one of the reasons why I wanted to do this deal with Jim. This could happen now, and I really feel that this is the next level, the next cutting-edge level that comics will be brought to. I love the fact that we could be laying the groundwork, actually being here at ground zero making it all happen. That also leads to what we're working on later. You've seen all the computer stuff that they've been doing in movies. That would be cool if you get all that stuff together, get an animation guy in there. The sculptures of the people have to look like Jim Lee person, and that one has to look like a Whilce person. I think if you do that–get them into a computer and scan them into an animation package and find the motion people that can move them the way we want to move them–at the beginning we could do little demos for 3DO games or Jaguar games. Then if that launches well, with that base market of comic book people using our characters, then that instantly launches into possible 3-D animation for cartoons, or for full features. There's no extra step, because the models are already made. The 3DO game will look exactly like the movie. This won't be where the market gets really interested in *Wetworks*, and then they hear that a movie's coming out, then they see the movie and it doesn't look anything like what they were expecting. This is a direct line into all those things, and there's no disappointment factor for the ready-made market.

You take a very long-term view of things, don't you?

I never believe in the short-view of anything, just in life as a whole. If you just tunnel-vision on what's happening on that particular day at that particular moment, you lose sight of what's happening all

around you. I've taken that into everything that I do.

From sixth grade on I've been in the "art field," and I've had great art teachers. I remember in my sopho more year of high school, I had a real good teacher, a really close relationship with that teacher. My parents, aside from the fact that since I was in sixth grade I've been winning all these awards and all this money and stuff like that, still wanted me to be a doctor or an engineer. I went to my art teacher pretty mad that my parents didn't see the potential and weren't looking at the whole picture as I saw it. My teacher floored me, because he said, "Don't take it too much too hard." He said, "A true artist learns from everything. If they want you to be an engineer or a doctor, go there. Learn anything



and everything you can, and apply that to your work." So anything and everything, from that point on, I got interested in, I just looked at it from that point of view: How would that affect my work, or how could my work evolve to partake of that new knowledge? So when I got into computers and 3-D animation, and video work, I saw it as a way to take our static drawings and make them come to life. I always thought of it in that way, how could I take all these real-life resources and make my drawings appear real?

How does it feel to be the voice of experience at Homage now?

There's not too much of that because while Jim was bringing people in, I was there in the studio. It all started in the studio, and it all came out of the studio. When the separators and Ben first came into the studio, since I had more first-hand knowledge of computers, I worked with Ben more than Jim did. My sisters were involved in the different divisions of the support group for the artists. My brother-in-law is now "Mr. Wildstorm," so he's our point man with the fans out there. As his company grew, I grew in that environment. They're all my friends and they're all part of my own little family. It's not really me coming in as a mentor or me coming in from the outside; it's just me officially saying that I'm art director now.

Earlier, you expressed an interest in characters like Deathlok or the Silver Surfer. How does that influence the characters you've created for *Wetworks*?

I don't want to think along specific lines like who do I want to turn into a Wolverine. Because I've had all this time, I've been able to ask all the questions and been able to figure out why this particular person is in the team, what this particular person's goals are, or does this person even have any goals? If he doesn't, why? Because I've tried to answer all those questions honestly, the characters are now who they are for me. What I've really been doing is giving them the suits, and then picking out a potential in them that will be exploited by the suits, which will turn them into the superheroes that they are. Instead of thinking of the specific characters as the specific characters, I'm trying to walk in their shoes. That's one of the things that I wanted to get through in issues #1 through #9, that you're walking in their shoes; you're following them as they go through their changes.



Hopefully, I'll be able to present them so that their reactions will be similar to your reactions if you were in the same situation. I think the reason those characters stick in my mind is because everything for that character worked for me. It seemed to be real. I think I've got *Wetworks* now to the stage where I won't be doing "my" Silver Surfer character, or "my" Deathlok character. Now, since they are, in essence, their own whole to me, they make sense as a whole to me. The buzz that I got out of the original Deathlok character and the original Silver Surfer character was because they seemed real to me. I could understand why they reacted the way they reacted. The feeling as I'm creating the *Wetworks* characters is that if I



[illegible] At the same time, I'm [illegible] a little more, because I'm [illegible] all those characters and [illegible] all real. That's actually one [illegible] strangest parts, because I've [illegible] not so much about it and I've [illegible] through hours with Brandon [illegible] years with Frances, my latest [illegible] partner. The characters just [illegible] bigger and bigger. I'm getting [illegible] buzz because they're getting [illegible] and more real, but am I going [illegible] enough room to show all [illegible] is it possible to show all that [illegible] history and why they're here. [illegible] certain things happen to [illegible] I truly commend all the know[illegible] that you guys

[illegible] having a venue to [illegible] think one other cool thing about this, for example if *Wetworks* ever went to a full feature length movie, because it's a different medium and it has its own characteristics, I could promise that the fans would love things in the movie that they didn't know or that were only just hinted at in the comic books.

How do you feel about the fact that you launched *Wetworks* in a very different kind of market than the other Image books?

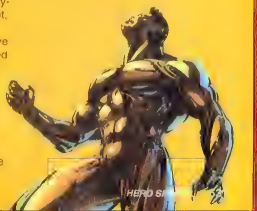
I like seeing the positive side of everything. I think one of the positive sides is that in [illegible] the hubbub of that first year and because of [illegible] the time that we had to [illegible] about it, *Wetworks* could have probably had a really good showing and probably would have had the numbers back then, but it might not have been what [illegible] need out to be. At the same time, because everything else was coming out, the concentration on *Wetworks* itself might have been different, as opposed to now. A lot of the spotlight has been on *Wetworks* to see what it was. It's my feeling that at least people liked the fact that *Wetworks* seemed to have a story, something underneath the glitz. I think that in the first year at least, the big push was just to show that us little boys could have done this, launch our own company and "control our own destinies." Now, because it's established, we can concentrate on tying everything to each other, and making everything make sense. The beauty of Brandon's idea is that with that book, it'll give you an idea of the reason why everything happens. It'll give you the possibilities, the potential of all the things that can happen, and it will tie so sweetly into all that has gone before. Like I said, Pilgrim will disappear in issue #6. In the series, everything will make sense.

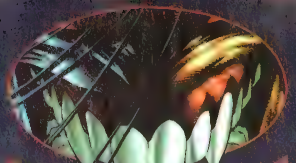
Anything and everything that happens, even if it seems like an inconsistency, always remember: we've thought about it. It is an inconsistency we're trying to throw you. I think it's appropriate that *Wetworks* comes out now. It's more of a concentrated effort, not to establish the company, because Image has already been established, to concentrate on making all of this make sense. The more real the characters seem to people, the more these characters will stay, and the longer the characters will live, even hopefully beyond us. I think we're at that development stage. Being what *Wetworks* has evolved into, I think it's real appropriate for the time. To me, I just see it all as being a lot of fun. I love to be part of it.

Anything else you want the readers to know?

All I'm going to say is: read each issue carefully.







DALE KEOWN'S CREATION IS A LABOR OF LOVE & BLOOD

THE FULL BLEED PITT CRUE

By Mike Stokes with Joe Fielder



DALE KEOWN PITT

What do thugs, chains, severed limbs, and aliens have in common?

Besides carnivals...

That's right, they're all trademark elements of Dale Keown's Pitt, and when he blends them together, they morph into a story wilder than an out of control tilt-a-whirl.

Maybe a lot of the dark and intense look of Pitt comes as a result of Keown's night owl habits, often rising in the evening and working to late in the morning.

Keown's (as well as writer Brian Hotton's) background as a heavy-metal musician may also influence his unique style.

Whatever it is, it's working. Pitt is one of the most visually impressive characters to surface in some time. Much of the alien's personal story continues to unwind with each new issue, spinning together intelligence and intensity, science fiction and the supernatural, man and monster, and a Keown signature—lots and lots of blood.

"It was about '85 or '86, and I'd just finished my last stint in a rock band. I quit and I was trying to find other work in the city I was living in, but it really wasn't a music place. In the meantime, I'd always liked drawing pictures, taking panels that were in

...ic books and blowing them up," ...own recalls. ...en I auditioned for about three ...our bands and nothing really ...ned out, so I said, 'Well, maybe I ...an put my drawing skills to work for ...e and make some money.'"

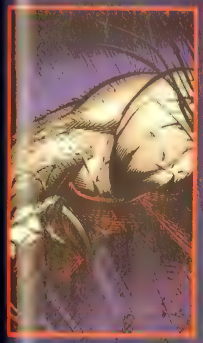
...own's break came after hearing ... the largest comic book compa... Canada on the news. ... Of course it was probably the only ..." he jokes.

"They said they were looking for ...ple to do some books, and I went ...n there the next day and showed ...y stuff, I think it was the ...ic Four samples I was working ... and they seemed to like it, so ... hired me and gave me a book.

A perfectionist who pays great attention to detail, Keown began to discover a future in drawing superheros and his optimum work pace at Aircel as well.

"Personally I don't think I was really ready for it," he says of his first book, "but it was certainly a challenge for me, and I got the work done, just because I was happy to be working. I got it done really fast so they gave me more work, and the more work they gave me, the slower I became.

"I went on and did a *Dragon Ring* book, and they decided that nobody else at the company really drew superheros (they were more into the underground comics), so they said, 'we'll make this book into a superhero







...w company that unleashed ...s talents on the comic book ... was Aircel with a book called *Samurai*, but there was one small ... he had to overcome from the ... beginning.

"I don't know how to draw a samu... sword," Keown laughs, "and the ... who was running the company ... apparently into martial arts and ... you're not drawing it right!' I ... drawing it more like *Conan* ... and I had this samurai character ... this sword like a bat, ... up all over the place."

Samurai did, however, turn out to be a good vehicle for Keown to display his fondness and skill for gore. ...uld draw somebody's arm get... off, and I would show everybody ... just went nuts," he remembook, so I turned all the existing characters into superheros and they called it *Dragon Force*," he says. "That was a lot of fun. I got to do the pencilling, inking and coloring myself."

Keown went on to find work as a guest penciler at Marvel before hearing about a penciler vacancy for *She-Hulk* left by John Byrne.

"I said, 'Wow, I wouldn't mind doing that,' so I contacted Bobby Chase who was the editor of *She-Hulk* at the time, and she said, 'Well, we already got somebody else, but I'll put you on my list, my active list.'

"I said, 'Oooh, I'm on Marvel's active list.' he chuckles, "and a couple of days later she phoned me and said, 'Would you like to do the Hulk?'

"It was penciling *The Incredible Hulk* that Keown really found his groove and surfaced as a major talent.

That was the one book out of all of them that I prefer[red] to work on—I was very happy about that."

Beginning a successful run on the Hulk with issue #367, Keown had intended to end with issue #400 before sinking his teeth into a new character he had been developing. After notifying Marvel of his impending departure, however, his Hulk days ended two issues earlier than anticipated.

"I ended up doing #398," he says, "I wasn't supposed to do 399: it was supposed to be a guest penciler but they decided to give 400 to somebody else.

"[It] was kind of a blessing, because I really didn't have a lot of time," Keown says. "I was pretty excited about this *Pitt* project. I had already started doing some *Pitt* stuff—I don't want to say it would have been a step backward, because I certainly enjoyed doing the Hulk, but I was just so excited about what I was doing, I was kind of glad to be free at that time."

It was Todd McFarlane who approached Keown about joining the image boys, prepping him on what they were doing and extending an open invitation for whenever Keown was ready to move on from Marvel.

When he did make the call to Image, they were ready for him.

"It was a couple months later [that] I phoned Jim Lee and I said, 'Well, I gave my notice,' and I heard this cheering in the background at Homage Studios," Keown recalls. "[It]

was kind of funny."

Keown began working on *Pitt* in June of 1992, and his creature debuted as a nine-page back-up story in the fourth issue of *Youngblood*.

Since that time, the legend of Pitt has been slowly unfolding, introducing his father, the evil Zoyvod, and exploring the link between Pitt and a little boy named Timmy.

"Basically, I'm trying to establish this situation where I can sort of study Pitt's powers and also young Timmy his newfound powers," Keown says.

"He's sort of in a coma now, but Timmy's going to slowly get used to his powers and I'm going to reveal what his true powers are."

Keown also promises that readers will soon learn more about Pitt and his powers by putting him in certain revealing situations, as well as using flashback scenes to begin revealing the origin.

"It's fun to sort of go blindly, but I think after a while, you have to back up to explain and bring the past into it to shine a perspective on what's happening," he says.

Keown intends on eventually going back to explain how Pitt, who is actually somewhat of a test-tube baby, was genetically engineered.

"I'm going to start watching the learning channel more so I can gather more information," Keown laughs.

Keown also promises to clear up some of the more obvious, yet ignored discrepancies running rampant in comics.

"We're going to go back to show why he knows how to speak English, he reveals. "little things like that always bothered me when I'd see aliens in comic books and they automatically know how to speak English."

In his most recent story arc, Pitt encounters a werewolf-type creature who tries to take his head off.

With Pitt already appearing in several outside books, Keown has some interesting thoughts on why his flat-nosed alien seems to be such a popular crossover target.

"Some artists I know don't like to draw noses, it seems to be a hard feature on a face to make look in proportion, so if you just eliminate the nose altogether a lot of artists will want to use your character.

"I seem to be getting, over the last few months, a lot of requests to use Pitt," he says, "I don't know why, maybe because he's fun to draw."

Keown has been pleased with the use of his character so far, although nearly each *Pitt* crossover changes the character in some small way.

"I thought they did a really good job in *Gen 13*. I thought they did some nice things with the character—I thought he was a little wordy, but I guess the writer for *Gen 13* is a more wordy person than I am," Keown laughs. "I keep his dialogue down to a minimum."

For more technical aspects, however, Keown is often consulted by other artists.

There's a scene in the first *Gen-13* that Pitt appeared in where he gets kicked in his, you know, jewels, so I got a call from the *Gen 13* crew asking if that would affect him or not–that's the kind of thing they would call me up for ... actually, that was the *only* thing that they called me up for.

"They already had a grasp on his dialogue," he continues, "they still kept Pitt fairly smart. He's not very articulate and tends to be rough around the edges, but I think they did a pretty good job."

Sam Keith's rendering of Pitt in his Maxx vs. Pitt crossover left a lasting impression on the character.

"That was a different, almost comical, take on the character," Keown says.

Now [illegible] drawing of the Pitt," Keown adds. "I'm drawing Pitt with bigger feet ... I like him with big feet; Sam has that really quirky kind of style."

Pitt is definitely a hot commodity around the Image titles, but does Keown have any thoughts of incorporating anyone else into his own work?

"I'm really dying to do a crossover with someone or just use somebody else's character in my book," Keown reveals.

"It'd be fun to do a team-up with *Wetworks*," he says. "I think that'd be interesting, because *Wetworks* is a relatively new release.

"Actually I'm going to talk to Whilce [Portacio] in August; maybe we'll talk about a crossover or something.

"I just drool over his stuff," he con-



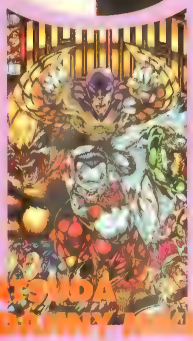





HERO
ILLUSTRATED
MATSUDA!

Jeff Matsuda is one of the new breed of Image artists, a fresh talent brought into the fold. In his short time at Extreme Studios, Jeff's work has truly come into its own and is proving to be a dynamic new style for the company. Jeff talked to us about his introduction to the comics scene, his influences and what it's like working at Extreme Studios.





JEFF MATSUDA & DANNY MIKI

by Joe Fielder

How did you get involved in comics originally?

Well, first I watched that videotape that Rob and Todd had. Todd was saying that you should only [send out] three or four pieces of your best work. I've been to conventions where people had something like 40 pages that I thought would kick my stuff all over the place, but all I'd noticed was the great stuff. Then I'd see the editors cut down everything bad—and there's a lot more bad things to find in 40 pages, than there is in three pages of your best work. So I sent my stuff out and then eventually Eric [Stephenson] gave me a call. [He] asked, 'Do you want a job?' I was pretty excited.

I did one quick pinup at home, and they said, come on out. I was looking forward to that forever. It was great. Doing comics is like a dream.

What was you first work there?

The first book I drew was *Youngblood Strikefile* #4. But then for some reason or another, it came out after the *Brigade* #0 story. So *Youngblood Strikefile* #4 was my first work, but *Brigade* #0 was the first to come out. From there, I did the *Troll* one-shot.

[Then] Rob was giving me a choice of a couple of projects, including the *Newmen* title to co-plot with Eric. And that attracted me a lot because I didn't want to just be a penciler on it. But he said *I* have some characters. *you* could create some. Rob was really generous. I went to his house one day and we doodled out what we wanted the costumes to look like, so it was more of like a fun thing. And he was like, 'Yeah, Let's go with this and then you create a guy for yourself too.' And ever since then, it's been a ball. Eric and I would just talk and figure out plot lines and create new characters ... *every issue.* (laughter) Or we try to.

What are some of your characters and plot lines that have come out in *Newmen* so far?

Exodus is our character. Elemental from issue #1 is our character. We have Ikonn from issue #4, which was a sub-plot running through all four issues, and it culminated in issue #4. That monster was our plot line, and for issues #4 and #5, he's the main villain—along with Marc Silvestri's Ripclaw helping out. We have some really big plans for some of the major characters.

Who are your influences artistically?

Overall, if I was to pick a number one, I'd think Michael Golden. I'll admit—Rob, Marc, and Jim, they put out stuff and I go, 'That's pretty cool. Wow, that's awesome.' But with Michael Golden—every *Punisher* cover, every *Batman* cover, every *Detective Comics* cover, every piece that he does for any other independent company—he takes a whole new take and makes them look awesome. He is just way too good. It's hard though, because I try to mix that with some Marc Silvestri, because I love Marc's stuff, too. His stuff, I think, is so organic and loose, but it's still got that hard edge to it.

What can you tell me about your time at Extreme?

I've learned that the studio atmosphere is really important because all the people strive and push you to get better. You have a pool of people that can critique your work. And it's a fun place to be. You can take your breaks but basically everybody works all the time.

And at other places you have to send your stuff off to inkers. Here, you get the top of the field inkers—and they're 10 feet away from you. You don't have to get it back and say, this is ugly, and send it back. I can just sit next to Jonathan Sibal and I can say, 'Use this effect *here*, and use this effect *here*.' And he'll ask, 'What do you think of *this?*' So it's an immediate turnaround. The coloring department is here too. Everything's in house here.



It's a good atmosphere. It's really creator-oriented, and that's a blast just to see your work every step of the way. There's no surprises where something that was supposed to be white is black and it's gone to print or something.

It's tough work, but it's worth the long hours because when you see your comic on the stands, there's no better feeling than seeing all 22 pages bound together.

What sort of hours do you put in at the studio?

Probably nine o'clock in the morning to seven or eight at night. Sometimes it's more, sometimes it's less. A lot of times, Rob invites us out to his house and we all play basketball together, and that's just a load of fun. I'd always heard before I joined comics, how Rob would play basketball and thought, Aw man, basketball is one love of mine and I'd love to play with him. It's fun. We played just yesterday.

What were the teams?

Yesterday was a very bad day to talk about. (laughter) It was Rob, Chap Yaep, and Marat Michaels versus Dan Fraga, Richard Horie, and myself. They won the first two games, and we won the last game.

You've done a fair amount of appearances. How have you handled all the attention?

I think that one thing that you have to keep in your mind, because it's really easy to get caught up in the idea of comics, is that it's basically for the kids. And I think once you forget that, it's easy to become a jerk. So I just try to keep that in my head ... when I go home after I haven't seen my friends for like a year, they don't stone me or something. (Laughter)

New to the comic industry, but not to illustration, Danny Miki's artistic talent carried him from being an assistant to inking Rob Liefeld's pencils in a fairly short span of time.

How did you get involved in comics?

I've been making up comics for a long time, but it all seems sort of like a fantasy trip. I was working part-time out in New Jersey at a stain-glass overlay, and I would go walking into comic book stores, just on my break time, and I saw a sign that said, "Art Thibert looking for assistant." I didn't know who he was at the time, I called the number, just by chance, and he happened to be the inker of *Uncanny X-Men*. And that's what broke me into comics.

All of a sudden Rob saw one of the drawings that I had done, and he asked me to work for him. I came down to the studio, checked it out, and one thing led to another. It was an unplanned type of thing. I didn't really have a portfolio or anything. And I wasn't expecting Rob to say, "hop in here and work, bro."

What were some of the first things that you did for Extreme?

Youngblood #4 was the first book I worked on.

You own the character Warcry from *Brigade* #0. How did that come about?

Eric and Rob just happened to be in my office and were having a conversation about what they wanted to do [with *Brigade* #0.] Eric wanted a new character, and I just happened in with, "Oh, I've got a new character!" Just the right time at the right place. Brigade happened to be going to Japan, so Eric said, "OK, let's see them." And that's how I lucked out—accidentally. It was a sketch! It was just a sketch! A real *ugly* sketch.



Who are your influences?

I'd say John Byrne, George Perez, and Terry Austin, back when I was collecting. The modern day and age—Jim Lee has got to be a pretty big influence.

Who has inspired you in the industry?

Rob Liefeld has really inspired me. We've been working together for almost two and a half years now. I think it's really awesome to be working with someone of that high of a status, from nothing! [laughter]



...as, "he's an amazing artist—and a ...good storyteller, too.

"...or me, it's always been a real ...t to take somebody else's charac... and make it my own, keeping the ...ance of the original artist, of ...se. In one of the *Hulk* plots," he ...ntinues, "there was a Spider-Man ...t, and I really enjoyed doing that. ...d to give him the spaghetti web- ...s like Todd [McFarlane] does.

"I love to do a crossover with the ...x, not just because Sam used my ...acter, but I've always wanted to ... The Maxx ... it'd be a nice little ...ntrast."

...nd as you might expect, Keown ...uld love to do a Hulk crossover, ...ough he doesn't know if that ...'d ever happen.

"...hat'd be interesting," he says. ...ong with his work on the *Pitt* ...mic book, bassist Keown and song- ...er Hotton are also working on ...e *Pitt*-based music.

"...e are working on some music ...now. I know I've said that in the past, ...but we're actually working on it now," he says.

"...was so bogged down with my ...adlines, I didn't have a lot of time to ...nd in my recording studio, but we ...d a singer, we have a drummer ...d up, and we actually recorded a ...ouple songs, so there definitely will ...come *Pitt* music."

...Keown and Hotton keep Pitt's ...e eyes, minds and even ears ...ngued, Pitt will continue fighting the ...good fight against Zovyod and what- ...ver evil come his or Timmy's way. ...s finding a place in a world that ...not be his own, but it's definitely ...er place with the massive alien. ...and a great book in this world as ...



OUTER THIS WORLD

[illegible] TO LAUNCH [illegible] WORLD SAGA [illegible] ON THE COMIC KINGDOM.

In his first comic book work, songwriter turned part-writer, Brian Hotton suddenly finds himself trying to land his own title, *Outer World*, with Image Comics.

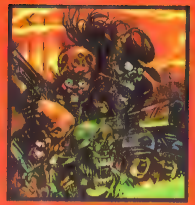
The fantastic story appears as a back-up in *WildC.A.T.S*. It's about the adventures of two kids, Krablo and Guidance, living in a dinosaur-invaded New York City in the year 2120.

The city gets blown up 60 years



prior to that, so they weren't even around when it happened," Hotton explains. "They're just the next generation that grew up amidst this rubble and new government—kind of like *Escape from New York*, but from a child's point of view. The rest of the country's intact, but New York's blown up; they're basically stuck there to deal with their own devices."

Growing up on *Archie* comics and



writing Pitt, Hotton has managed to blend elements of each along with his original ideas.

"I really loved those books and I still do," says Hotton. "I like the idea of not really having a proven superhero thing, but just the adventures of a couple of kids from their point of view, with that innocence and spontaneity that children have."

Some of Hotton's inspiration comes from his 7-year-old daughter.

"She just never fails to amaze me how she's always so spontaneous; it envelopes her whole world—what she sees, what she says, you get so used to looking at things through your own perspective, that when you look from somebody else's like a child's it's weird. It just seems to be a neat way to see things from a different angle. You can write more. He continues: "You can go at it from different directions if you have more perspective on the ages and the way different people look at things."

Working with Keown on the upcoming, hard-rocking *Pitt* music, in addition to the book, he looks forward to the challenge of making *Outer World* a regular Image title, which relies largely on fan-support.

"I'd like to get my own book published, and that's a great goal to have, and I think I have something interesting to say. I am fortunate to be surrounded by excellent people. A gentleman by the name of Goran Delic is the illustrator of *Outerworld*. Between Goran and Dale, I am in comic book heaven."

Delic is from Zagreb, Croatia, where he enjoyed success with a book called Starrat, which is translated into eight languages, and he's also in the pullpen at Nelvana working on the WildC.A.T.S. animated series.

Seeking readers comments, Hotton can be reached through Letter Rip, PO Box 25466, Anaheim, CA, 92825.

WHAT'S BLACK, WHITE AND RED, AND TRAVELS THROUGH TIME?

Al Gordon Relates His Chronological Journey With Wildstar and Image Comics



AL GORDON WILD STAR

by Joe Fielder

Time travel? Hmmm. Scary stuff. If you could, would you travel back and thrash yourself soundly for mistakes you were about to make? Would you even change history?

You might be wondering what this has to do with Image Comics—but that'd only be if you didn't read *Wildstar*. Along with artist and co-creator Jerry Ordway, Al Gordon founded a whole new branch of the Image Universe with *Wildstar: Sky Zero*—and nearly mapped out the entire confusing out through time. How did it all begin? Chronologically!

During his time writing and inking over at DC, Gordon was urged by several Image founders to join ranks with their group. "I've been friends with Todd, Rob and Erik for about seven years," Gordon says. "Erik and I have been pretty close working on a studio together for probably about five or six years out of that time. It was during a time when everybody was doing really cool books. I think it was when Erik and Todd were both doing *Spider-Man* titles, Mr. Lee was doing the *X-Men* and Rob was doing *X-Force*. Everybody had the idea of, 'Hey, the industry has really changed at this point and people are buying the books



cause they like us, not just because ey like the *X-Men*.' Which I think is d and bad. I think it's very good for that people will say, 'Hey, I got a rry Ordway book, that's neat!' But personally more inclined toward s that are into the character. Those s the most interesting to me.

When we did *The Legion of perheroes*, we used to get the greatmail from fans who were just really the story line. They were into the p-opera aspect it like it was *rthern Exposure* or something. They ly got into the characters' motiva-, and I like that a lot. During the e I was doing *The Legion of perheroes*, I'd actually been asked ink *Spider-Man* and I opted off of it. cause Keith [Giffen], Tom and Mary [illegible] and I were having so much . Of course no one was buying it, t we were having such a good time. s what I thought. The chance to [illegible] artistic move here, going [illegible] to work. Keith was really [illegible] chops saying, 'I know, you me up with a lot of really bizarre ff, and I think you could do this on ur own.' So I wrote the Quiet [illegible] story which was *Legion of perheroes* #21-24, and people went, ey! This is ain't bad. Let's let him e something else. So I wrote the *ber Wolf* [miniseries], and I opted not to go with ese guys. They were going, 'C'mon, 're going to put this company togeth-. We're going to shoot the moon.' d I was saying, 'Good luck. You s go for it. I wish I could be with , but I'm working on a book that's *t making any royalties*, so I really n't afford to get off something regular and not get any income for six nths. Starting a company is an nsive venture.

rik [Larsen] kept saying, 'Look, you're crazy. I'll lend you the money. There was some other stuff going on and I was really financially strapped, and I said, 'No, I don't borrow from friends.' But eventually I decided I had to go for it. And I'm sure glad I did. It was the opportunity of a lifetime. The artistic freedom is scary and satisfying, at the same time. It's really weird to be on the bridge of your ship, turning the wheel. You're responsible for all the decisions you make."

Writing *Wildstar*, Gordon tried to bring something more to the scripting than is generally seen in comic dialogue. "I love it when someone's dialogue tells you something about him, it's not just the person saying something. It's expository dialogue but it's not expository about the story, it's expository about *who* he is. I have a lot of fun with it, and I hope that shows. I hope the fans pick up on that."

Gordon and Ordway found creating a comic from scratch to be a much more monumental task than they expected. "We had no idea how much 'publishorial,' editorial work was involved in putting out a comic book. I never learned to read a blue print before. It takes a few hours every time you do a comic book to sit down and read through the stuff. I'd never done a letter page from scratch. By the time the letter page comes out, it's been proofread eight, nine, 12 times. I had no idea it was going to be that much office work. And Jerry and I pretty much did everything ourselves, with the help from the Budmeister [Bill 'Bud' Shakespeare]."



For the recently released *Wildstar: Sky Zero* trade paperback, Gordon wanted to have much more than just a simple reprinting of the miniseries—thus a complete supplemental section was added. "Jerry and I are really big laser disc fans, and [some] have these great supplemental sections," Gordon explains. "We thought, 'If we were kids again, what would we want to see?' The supplemental sections have all the ads, all the promos, all the covers. We took the logos off, and had all the pages reformatted. If you weren't into *Wildstar* or only bought one, you have *everything* now. Quite literally. It has copies of the trading cards that we did, and the T-shirt design we did is reproduced on paper. It also has everything we did in designing the character, all the preliminary sketches.

"And there are two extra pages of story. One is just a drawing that fits in that was really only done to affect the pagination. We added another page to also affect the pagination but when I started writing this page, it made more sense to me. It brought it full circle. So I felt sorta dumb like, 'Hey! This page should've been in the original story.'

Coming up after the trade paperback reprinting the miniseries is the *prequel* to *Sky Zero* (*Time travel is a many splendored thing*). Chris Sprouse and I are doing a two-issue miniseries. We figured the four-issue mini hadn't confused people enough, so we decided to do a story that was a prequel. If you read the series you know that in issue three the reader finds out that the guy that comes back in time is really Mickey! It's the same guy. We find out how he gets the star in the first place, so that he can come back in time and give it to his younger self and we'll see the guy he gets the Wildstar from in the first place."

"This guy is like a mean motor-scooter, and a bad go-getter. I mean he *is bad*. We're calling him Bloodstar. He's just this big part-ape part-spider person and his name echoes through hundreds of solar systems. He's wreaked havoc in half a galaxy ... and all sorts of other George Lucasisms.

"So we get to see him and we get to see Mickey, just a few years in our future, exchange the star. And then we're done with that. *Wildstar: Sky Zero* #T-1 is the first issue, and then the second is *Wildstar: Sky Zero* #0. So, it's *Wildstar: Sky Zero* #T-1, 0, and then issues #1-4. *And then* we come out with the regular series. I can't say who's doing it now but we're going to put out a four-page preview that I think is going to just blow people away. [The series] should be right on the tails of the two issues, probably very early, next year. We're going to be putting it out as monthly as we can get it."

Looking at some of the talent he's worked with so far, Gordon simply exudes respect. "I couldn't ask for more than working with two of the heaviest guys. I've got about three more guys I could pick, and then if I get to work with them—I could just die. My wish list would be fulfilled."

A SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM



JAE LEE





by Joe Fielder

Though a relative newcomer to comics, Jae Lee has quickly developed a style all his own and staked out his place in the comics scene as one of its most popular artists. In July, his first fully-owned creation, Hellshock, makes its way to the stands under the Image Comics banner. We recently asked Jae about the past, present, and future of himself ... and his creations.

Like just about everyone else in the comic book field, Lee began reading comics and enjoying them at a very young age. And though always enamored of art as well, Lee had no idea that his two interests would someday mix. "I always knew that I wanted to go into some sort of art field, but I thought it would be commercial art. I never knew it would be comics.

"When I went to a comic convention in New York, I showed my work around, and I was lucky enough to meet the right people who could give me work. I met [several] editors, and they weren't interested at the time. [Then] I met Scott Lobdell.

He writes the *Uncanny X-Men* right now, but at the time he wasn't working on [illegible]. It was really kind of him to look at my work, and he offered to help me break in. Since he lived up here he was willing to take all my stuff around and show it to all the editors. That's how I got in.

"If Scott hadn't shown my stuff around, I probably would have felt defeated that first time when the editors didn't like my stuff. And the stuff was really bad.

"From there, Jae went on to be hooked up for a story line in *Marvel Comics Presents* which a certain gentleman by the name of Rob Liefeld had done work on. "It was an eight-part Beast story, issues 85 through 92 [of *MCP*]. The first two parts were done by Rob Liefeld and the last six parts I did. Rob had done the first two parts like a year before I ever started on it. At the time, *X-Force* was coming out by [illegible], so the editor figured it was a good time to put that story out. And since Scott Lobdell was writing it I just sneaked my way in.

"Liefeld and Lee actually met at the same convention where Jae had met Scott Lobdell. Though the two did not exactly pick up quite the



Nolan, and a whole slew of other artists—but those three would be my main artistic influences in terms of people I try to actually draw similar to. Of course there are a ton of artists whose work I really enjoy looking at. (Such as) Adam Kubert. People like that.

"Lately, you might notice Lee's artwork has a more commercial art illustration influence to it. Jae confessed that his stylistic development is stemming from a friend he'd met [illegible] art teacher at a college in Maryland [illegible] all of these artists from outside of the comic book industry into me. Jose and David Larks are the colorists on the book, and Richard Starkings is lettering. They're really doing great work.

"In an industry that espouses rumors of Image creators calling up and 'stealing' away other artists from other companies, fans may be surprised to know that Jae's coming over to Image began as something as innocuous as a request by Rob Liefeld to do some pinup work during his *Namor* stint. "I never ended up doing them, but talks progressed enough that he asked me to do a book for him—*Youngblood*.





artistic career. Byrne is, admittedly, an early influence for Jae. But after his *Marvel Comics Presents* story, Jae would go on to replace Byrne as the penciler of Marvel's *Namor*. "The editor of *Marvel Comics Presents* is Terry Cavanaugh, who was also the editor for *Namor*. The six-part Beast story was more of a trial thing for me, and when I met the deadlines, he gave me the regular assignment with *Namor*. I jumped at the chance to work with John Byrne. I just wish I was able to talk to him more, to learn from him. I really should have tried to take advantage of that.

"Back when I was little, I was always into the John Byrne books. Lately my influences have been Bill Sienkewicz, Simon Bisley, Kevin





Strikefile. He asked me which character of Youngblood I really liked, and I said the big guy with the guns. So that's how the *Youngblood Strikefile* story with Chapel came about. And then Jim Lee had called me up shortly after that and asked me to do a *WildC.A.T.s* project. I jumped at that chance to work with my brother. (Referring to *the long since separated-at-birth Jim Lee.*)

From there, Lee spent a considerable amount of time bringing his own creation, *Hellshock*, into existence. "I've been working on it for the past six months. I was feeling a little burnt-out from juggling *Namor*, a monthly book, and then working on *WildC.A.T.s* and *Youngblood*. I wanted to put some quality work on this, so I took my time with it.

"It's a four-issue miniseries right now. Hopefully it will become a regular series. And it's a story about this character who is not what he appears to be. All of these characters in the book are not what they appear to be. It's more along the lines of a horror-suspense-mystery with superhero elements thrown in.



I'm trying to go for a cooler feel, and all that lovely dark stuff. And what Hellshock is, he's the son of an angel and a mortal woman, and his powers, he's got this heavenly heritage to him and yet he's half human. So it's kind of like a very bizarre *Highway to Heaven*, if you can picture that.



The basics are that Hellshock is half human, half angel. He was born from an immaculate conception between a mortal woman and an angelic father. In the first issue we see Hellshock wandering the streets of New York City lost among all the rest of the human refuse. He doesn't know of his angelic heritage. His hair is long and greasy, and his clothes are in tatters. If you looked into his eyes you could see that he was crazy.

"Think of Hellshock as having two sides—one human, and the other angelic. The human side was dominant for the first 13 years of his life. Then, when he reached puberty, his angelic side began struggling to escape. He began seeing visions of angels and spirits and things men was not meant to see. His young human mind fought to comprehend what was happening; and, as he grew older, the visions became more intense until it drove him crazy. His human brain shut down and the angelic side in him emerged.

"But his angelic side was just as lost. He still possessed a human body, but without a human mind to balance the esoteric half, he became even crazier. He ultimately lost all touch with reality.

"He's 21 years old in issue one, which after various events concludes in a massive fire. The insane





[illegible] burns to death but in the [illegible] miracle happens—the [illegible] human child and brings his two halves together. In that moment, Hellshock is born.

To prep himself for writing the book, Lee looked for inspiration in places inside and outside the comics medium. "I've been reading [illegible] the dead. That kind of a thing comic book wise. I like Neil Gaiman, who everyone seems to like, and John Byrne and Frank Miller. All those guys everyone likes about.

"I've also been doing a lot more research into books about angels and things like that. Things on the various mythology and history of what people believe about angels. Their place in history. Their place in the Bible. That kind of stuff. It was a lot of research I would probably never do in school, but I'll do it now for comic books. Because it's for a comic book, it's actually fun. As long as I don't get tested on it.

"I'm reluctant to reveal too much about (*Hellshock*). I never know how to go about this in interviews because I want to talk about the book, and yet I don't want to reveal too much.

"Let's just say that in *Hellshock*, I'm not dealing with heaven or hell or with angels as this general group of beings. I'm not going to be very broad in that sense. I'm just going to concentrate on Hellshock himself and the five or so supporting characters. Hellshock just happens to come from one group of angels, and there are many different groups of angels. I'm only going to deal with that because Todd McFarlane is dealing with heaven and hell on a far grander scheme.



Not only is *Hellshock* unlike many other image books in it spacing, it also avoids direct interaction with the Image Universe right off the bat. The only place Hellshock will be found outside his title in the next few months is on the upcoming Image Jam T-shirts. "They have all the image characters," says Jae. "And Hellshock happens to be one of them."



And not only has Lee devoted a great deal of time on this book, he's currently not working on any other projects. "This is it. I put everything of myself into this book."

Though not yet out, *Hellshock* has Jae anxiously awaiting fan reaction. If it's met well by readers ... it's up to Image from there. I'd love to do [illegible] series), so when I get a green light from them, I'll do it." ▲



A Chronology of Jae Lee's Work:

- *Marvel Comics Presents* #85-92
- *Namor, The Sub-Mariner* #26-40
- *Youngblood Strikefile* #1-3
- *WildC.A.T.s* Trilogy #1-3
- *Spider-Man* #41-43



ART THIBERT

BLACK & WHITE

by Steve Spaulding

Thibert draws as he talks. You'd never know it when you're on the phone with him. He has a brain that can work on many different levels at the same time. Right now he's working on his new series, *Black & White* for Image. The inspiration for the new series comes from the comics and characters he loved as a kid, 1960s television, and his life up to this point, which has included some strange circuitous paths through the comic book industry.

Art started out working for the independents, and doing pencils for some DC before hooking up with Warp Graphics, Richard and Wendy Pini's company that puts out the *Elfquest* books. They were independently publishing for a while, I guess they still are with *Elfquest*, but they had a whole line of comics, and the one that Jim Valentino and I both did was called *Myth Adventures*, the Robert Asprin book." Valentino and Thibert followed Phil Foglio's popular adaptation of the fantasy humor series. Thibert came to Warp Graphics through Brian Murray, a friend of his and Jim Valentino's. "Jim was overworked and needed an assistant. I worked for about a year as Jim's assistant before I moved on.

And from there Art went on to work for Marvel Comics. "I always wanted to work for the independents ... that's what my heart was always in. I liked the stuff that Dave Stevens was doing and what Pacific comics was doing at the time, stuff like that. But I figured if I went mainstream, if I went to Marvel or DC, it would at least be a steady paycheck—because I'd heard that the independents were a little flighty at the time. So I went to Marvel." He stayed and collected his paychecks for a number of years, working his way up to the status of "Hot" artist, earning his stint on *Cable*. "I was really quite happy there. Marvel treated me well. I was penciling, which was something I really wanted to get back to because I had to ink for about three years before that. But I started out as a penciler—I don't think many people know that. I penciled *Warlord* and *Time Masters* and various other things, a lot of things that didn't see print. So I wanted to get back into it, and Marvel was really cool and gave me do a couple of fill-in issues of *Iron Man* when Jim [Lee] left. And then I did the *Cable* series."

But eventually Art would hear the call of the wild self-publisher—in this case Rob Liefeld. "Rob and I were talking one day, and he asked me if I would like to do my own series. I've known Rob for a lot of years, and he knew that I always wanted to work on my own creation. [And] it's great! Image took off like a rocket. They're still going like crazy.

So Art was on-hand to be a part of the Image explosion, and is still amazed at how far they've gone. Looking back, there seems to be some irony in having gone from independent publishing to mainstream, and then back to an independent that has become large enough to give the mainstream companies quite a bit to think about.

Just because he keeps moving doesn't mean that Art Thibert is burning any bridges behind him. Art doesn't talk about good or bad experiences with a company or an organization, instead he talks about the different people he's worked with and how those relationships have turned out. And if the relationship was good, it doesn't much matter to him what company the person works for. "I still keep my fingers in the mix. I can't do as much as I would like to only because I am so busy working to bring Black & White to publication. However, there are always editors that when they call me and want me to do something special, I say, 'Sure,'"

The long road to industry success started, oddly enough, with a POW! a BOP! and a KRUNCH!!!

"When I was a kid, it was mostly Batman. I've always liked the whole Batman concept. As a kid, I never missed the Batman TV show. That sounds corny now, but I loved it. I think Batman was what got me hooked on comics, and I stayed hooked up to my teens. Then I discovered girls and took a detour. Later the independents started coming out with comics that were geared toward older audiences, and I liked the wider range of reading material and artwork." Watching the comics he'd loved as a kid grow up with him brought Art back to the medium. After a stint playing drums for a fairly popular LA band, Art found that music didn't necessarily cover what was needed to live on and began thinking that comics was the right career move. The rest is history.

As an artist, Thibert takes his inspiration from the world around him and the work of other artists. "I think at any particular moment, I'm always looking at people. I think as long as it's a good and it catches my eye I'm really into it and influenced by it ... what I've done with *Black & White* [is] take the best of Art Adams and kind of throw in some Frank Miller on top of that." The heavy influence of Frank Miller's gritty style on top of Adamsesque beautiful, people has coined a new art term at Image studios: grunge line. "[Frank Miller] didn't have a real pretty ink line, the ink line was kind of dirty, so I kind of want to get into that. Everyone at the studio nicknamed it, the grunge line, like, 'Art's doing the grunge line with the ink.' So I'm trying to get the really nice cartoon aesthetic, really pleasing people, with a grunge line on top of it. It's kind of like coming back to my early roots with Frank Miller, Art Adams, and all that."

Black & White begins as a new three-part miniseries that Art will be penciling, inking, and co-writing with his wife Pamela. The issues will be titled Black, White, and Gray, instead of 1, 2, and 3. As the title suggests, the main characters see the world in absolute terms. In their adventures they try to cut through the webs of complexity and corruption that surround them, and find the good and the bad. The good to be upheld, and the bad to be punished. A lot of the inspiration for the series comes from Art and Pamela's frustration at the moral ambiguity of the present day. "The tagline, 'In a world where law and order are often blurred to gray ... justice can only be *Black & White*,' pretty much sums up the concept for the series. They believe that good and right should remain untainted by the gray areas of life. Of course we all know that life isn't like that, but hey.





this is comics, and we can create a perfect world."

Or at least by the end of the series their beliefs end up that way. In the beginning, Black is more of the moral stand of the two. Black, a.k.a. Reed Blacket, is an ex-agent of M-10, the highest level of operations in the British secret



service. After retiring and establishing a new identity for himself, he moves to America to become a private businessman, only to meet Whitney Sampson. White. Whitney is a 12th degree back belt and the owner of the Kamasaya Brewery. At the start of the story, White sets out, not for justice but for blood. "White is a ninja-chopping lady who is hell on wheels! She doesn't agree with Black's methods of handling problems. In the miniseries she wants vengeance, and Black has to "try" to keep her in control. You'll notice that the main word there is 'try.'

But to make it all work takes a special kind of bad guy. Enter Chang. He's evil, he's ruthless, he has money



and minions galore. But don't call him just another supergenius bent on world domination, you might make him mad ... "What's really cool about him is that the technology he's using is based on technologies that were created during the Second World War by the Nazis. As a kid he finds a

hidden laboratory and comes back to it as an adult. He exploits the technology for his own takeover schemes. It's past technologies with a '90s edge." And, of course, only Black and White have a chance of stopping him.

In retrospect, Art and Pamela began writing the series years before it ever solidified into an actual project. Pamela's interest comes from a real love of comics and passion for writing. "She's always been a writer, but not of fiction. She wrote policies and procedures for one of the local aerospace firms based here. A couple of years ago we were going to do a Nightwing project for DC. That fell through when Jonathan Peterson left. When Rob gave us the go-ahead from image to do our own book, it didn't take us long to come up with the *Black & White* concept.

Actually, all it took was a catalyst, and one, oddly enough, that hearkens back to the 1960s television that got Art interested in comics in the first place. "It came out when we were at a Bruce Lee estate auction ... we're big Green Hornet fans here. We have all the radio days tapes and stuff like that ... I was trying to get some of the Green Hornet stuff. They had his hat, and his suspenders and some of the throwing darts ... but they were way above what we could afford. It was just cool to see that stuff. And then as we were driving home we just clicked. We just started talking about this stuff, and almost all of it came out at one time. The tag line, the concept of the characters, everything. It must have been in there all along, it just needed a catalyst to get out. That always makes me feel good. When you have to fight for something to come out, you wonder, maybe it's not right. But when it's quick and easy, you feel as if it were meant to be. I used to love the gadgets the Green Hornet used. Things like the Hornet Sting and the gas gun. Black is like that. His gun fires sleeping darts that are bullet shaped and that lodge under the skin. On contact they mix with the nervous system and put the people down. We can still have it look like there is actually a bullet hitting—for all the kids who want to see blood—but it doesn't kill."

While the series will be coming out in October, Art is already making plans for Reed and Whitney's future. "We're going to wait and see what the reaction is like. So far it's been really good." And if it does well they hope to come out with an ongoing series.

For the moment, however, Art has his hands full. *Black & White* is the most control he's ever had over a project, and with it come more hassles than he's ever had to deal with. "[This is] the most work I've ever had to do just to get the simplest of tasks done. I have a lot of respect for the image founders. They caught a lot of flack for not putting product out on time, but people don't have any idea how much you have to do behind-the-scenes to get this stuff going. With solicitations, advertisements, promotion. It's phenomenal just how time-consuming that stuff can be ... with those guys, their only background was drawing the books, so they not only had to do that, which was enough work in itself, but they had to take care of all the other [business] stuff too. So it's just amazing that they pulled it off. Those guys are majorly intense."

But for all the hard work, Art is just happy to be working on a project that he really believes in and hopes the reading public will get a kick out of. "Give *Black & White* a chance, and if you like it, let us know. Write letters and tell us what you feel—it really helps." ▲



CHARTER SUBSCRIPTION OFFER!

CINESCAPE

THE MAGAZINE OF MOVIES AND TELEVISION ON THE EDGE

GET 12 ALL COLOR ACTION-PACKED ISSUES FOR

ONLY $19.95

Save $10 Off the Regular Subscription Price!



The coupon below is your VIP pass to special savings on a charter subscription to the only full-color monthly magazine of science fiction, action, and adventure movies! Save big bucks and get the first word on the hottest new movies and TV every month!

SAVE BIG BUCKS! WARP INTO CINESCAPE TODAY!

Get 12 full color issues of CINESCAPE for only $19.95! You'll get the hottest previews of upcoming movies and TV shows, plus special interviews and behind-the-scenes reports that can't be found anywhere else!

Send payment to: CINESCAPE, P.O. Box 1733 Lombard, IL 60148-6925

ACT NOW!

and receive Issue One, Polybagged With An Original Movie Poster

12 Issues For Only ~~$29.95!~~ $19.95

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ ZIP _____
_____ Payment Enclosed _____ Bill Me

For Credit Card Orders, Call:
1-800-321-4376

ACT NOW! Get your subscription to CINESCAPE today. Secure three issues before publication date—at once by mail and invoice will be sent. Make check or money order payable to Sendai Publishing Group, Inc. Canada and Mexico $29.95. All orders must be prepaid. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of first issue. Offer limited to one subscription per household. Subscriptions must be drawn on American bank. (American Express money orders, Canadian money orders or any other type of check or money order that would go through a U.S. bank). All foreign orders must be prepaid. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of first issue.

HHSJ1

TEAM ALREADY WITH HIS EXTREME'S OWN CREATION, YOUNG YAEP IS FINDING BLOOD THE IMAGE WAY.

By Jason Schneider





Everyone's heard the myth about how an artist gets into the comic book industry. He's some guy out of Southern California who's loved comic books all his life. He follows the work of other artists and copies their work trying to get a feel for the page while getting together a portfolio, brings it to the conventions, walks it around, and then the miracle happens. He meets up with an editor who likes his work, and *he's in.*

Yeah. Right. *We all know how it really works.* The artist spends long years working in advertising or book illustration, hoping for a break in the industry. Then through a friend of a friend he finds some low-level fill-in job at Marvel or DC. He gets his work in some new talent showcase, or in a back-up story, or pinch hitting in a minor book. And little by little he works his way up in the industry. That's the way it happens. Everyone knows that.

Everyone except Chap Yaep, who came out of high school with a portfolio of work, sending in submissions, and making the convention circuit.

"I just got lucky and ran into a couple of the guys at Extreme before me, like Dan Fraga, Marat [Michaels], and all those guys. They helped me bring my stuff up to Rob [Liefeld]. I guess he saw some potential there because he gave me a shot at doing some work."

Liefeld flew Chap from Oakland to Image studios—a dream come true for any comic book fan who aspires to work in the industry. "I was blown away by it."

After the shock wore off, Rob brought Chap into his office where they discussed his new job. "We just sat down and talked about what I wanted to do." What he ended up doing was penciling *Team Youngblood*, and he's been making a name for himself with that title ever since.

"It was my first job, and I was kind of scared. Image [has] all of these incredible guys. But it was a learning experience."

The main ingredients of Chap's success have been raw talent and hard work, but no formal art training. Chap learned to draw from studying the old masters: "A lot of the great guys, like George Perez, John Byrne, and Art Adams. When I was in school, I'd look at their stuff and go, 'Wow, they're awesome!' And then all the Image guys came out, and I was blown away by what they did." Armed with inspiration and a lot of drawing paper, Chap steadily improved his style, first tracing the work of artists he admired, figuring out the anatomy and geometry, then copying freehand, and finally doing his own work. "Even though people say it's not good to learn from comics, now to draw, which I believe is true, but I guess I learned something."

Just because it's a dream job doesn't mean that it isn't also a lot of hard work. About 12, even 14 hour days are common for an artist at Image Studios. "I usually get in at 10:00, and I work till about 7:00 at the earliest. Sometimes I'll work 'til midnight, and sometimes when I'm not finished with something. Or when I'm in the groove of something I'm working on, I'll bring it home and I'll work on it some more, or else stay till morning. It depends on what I'm working on, and how into it I am."

The groove is a place a lot of artists find themselves. Yaep explains: "That's when you're drawing something, and everything is working out right. The face came out well, the hands are looking good. And I want to keep on drawing. I mean, if I stop, who knows? If I stop now and get back to working on it later, I might start having problems with it."

Hard work has its rewards all the same. One of the things that Yaep enjoys about working in a studio is seeing the work he does pass from hand to hand, being changed and refined at different stages. "You get to see the whole process... everything is done right here." And being a penciler, his favorite part is seeing the inking take place. "Here at Image we get to work with some of the best inkers in the industry, and we get to see our work improve by leaps and bounds. They usually make it better than I ever thought it could be."

When all is said and done, they get to have a first look at a brand new comic. "When we finally get the bound copy, everyone just gathers around to look at it, and we get all excited. It's like all the hard work has paid off, and you get to see the final version of it."



Being surrounded by so much high caliber talent, Yaep finds his own work being influenced for the better. "I just want to keep improving my work and what I do. I just want to keep getting better and better. There are guys like John Byrne who have been doing this kind of work in the industry for [years]. I want to be like that."

But being an artist at Image is an education in more than just art. Image was founded on the idea that an artist's rights and responsibilities go far beyond turning out a certain number of pages in a day. "I've learned a lot about how comics work. You've got to get it to the printers by the stated time, you can't afford to hold other people up. I guess the business side of it as well. Trying to keep your feelers out. [It's] a lot of stuff where, if you were working at home and not in the studio, you really wouldn't be aware of." While Yaep may not have had the experience of working for one of the larger corporate-controlled comic book companies, he is still very much aware of the difference between them and Image—it is a difference he seems grateful for. "I talked to a lot of artists before I got into the field, and I has cavity think 'Oh my God, they had to go through that, and put up with this thing.' But with Image it seems as if everything is easier. Not easier in terms of how much work you have to do, but easier in terms of your creative choices. If I want to do a certain type of story, I can talk to Rob and Eric, my editors, about how I want to do this, and work out something that everyone is happy with, story-wise."

Working at Image, Chap has found that each creator acts like his own small-scale comic book company. The six founding fathers of Image made the break from the mainstream in order to have greater creative control, and to see the work they did benefit themselves instead of a corporation. Now that Image is a success, they want to pass on those opportunities to the next generation of Image artists. Take a look at the inside cover of *Team Youngblood*. There in very small print is one of the very big changes in the industry.

"Dutch is trademark and copyright Chap Yaep. All rights reserved." The character of Dutch may have started in one book, owned by one company, alongside a certain set of characters, but from here on out, the decisions Yaep makes for himself he will be able to make for Dutch as well. "I created him," Rob asked me, 'Do you want to put him in *Youngblood*?' and I said of course! And I own him. Any other character that I create, I own, and if we do anything with him, I'll benefit from it." ▲





Todd Nauck turns from fan to favorite

EXTREME TALENT

By Mike Stokes



TODD NAUCK

EXTREME STUDIOS

Todd Nauck is living every comic fan's dream.

After winning several comic art contests including *HERO ILLUSTRATED*'s Mad About the Madman, Nauck suddenly finds himself in the employ of Extreme Studios penciling *Supreme* as well as the upcoming *Badrock & Co.* six-issue miniseries.

"I got into it in kind of an odd way," he says of his new career. "Some buddies of mine from college took some of my samples to a convention and showed them to Dan Fraga [who] brought them back and entered them into the talent search. A few days later, Eric Stevenson called [with] some pinup assignments, and work just started snowballing in from there, and they invited me to come out to the studio and work for them full-time."

When hearing the news, Nauck was ecstatic.

"I was bouncing off the walls," he laughs. "I couldn't believe it. I've been a big fan of Rob [Liefeld]'s and enjoyed Extreme titles [since] Image started, so to get to work for him–to do a brand new series–was just unbelievable."

Nauck says that drawing comics is all he's wanted to do since he was 14 years old, shortly after he began collecting.

"I was a Marvel zombie when I started collecting comics in eighth grade," he recalls. "I picked up *Secret Wars*, those were the first few comics that started me on the comic collecting road, and then I started collecting *X-Men* and Amazing *Spider-Man*–those were my favorite books at the time.

"When I first started collecting, I was collecting for the characters—to me, all the artists looked the same," Nauck says. "[but] the more I started collecting, the more I was able to distinguish who was who. I started developing interest in different artists and different writers and started looking for their works."

The 23-year-old Nauck credits artists Arthur Adams, Rick Leonardi, and Walter Simonson as being the first influences on his work.

A graduate of the Art Institute of Dallas, Nauck warns that hopeful comic book artists need to be persistent and to be able to draw much more than superheroes to be successful in the field.

"Learn all the different aspects," he says. "Don't just draw big huge guys and beautiful women—learn things like perspective and storytelling, because it's all of those elements that will together that make the comic, not just one cool guy coming at you because soon, that'll get boring. You need the details and the background, you need to know how to draw everything from toasters to cars to trees, because everything you see in the world around you will one day end up in a comic.

"Looking at my favorite artists, like Arthur Adams [I] always had those little things in the background you could always go back to that page and look and find little things in the background. He took the time," Nauck adds. "When he drew a kitchen scene, you could see all the appliances and the pots on the floor and that's what I thought was really cool, because the characters really looked like they were in that environment, and that's something that I want to make sure I can convey in my pages.

"When I was in high school, and I started developing favorite artists and getting in to comics and decided that's what I wanted to do for a career, nothing could stop me," he says.

"When my folks realized that's all I wanted to do, they became very supportive. When I got to college, going to the art institute, I took those classes to apply it to comics. Things that I learned in graphic design, I thought 'how can I apply this to comics? How can I lay out a page using this stuff?' All those design elements I applied to comics, because that's all I wanted to do–there's just something about comics that's so exciting and so much fun. It's a really cool medium."

As Nauck continues drawing for Extreme and developing his own characters, he realizes that breaking into comics takes a lot of skill and a little luck, and for up-and-coming artists to believe in their abilities and never give up.

"Just keep on plugging away," Nauck advises. "Show your stuff to as many people as you can, try to make it to every convention possible, and not be afraid to show your stuff. Some people will like it and some people won't, but you never know, one day, you'll take your stuff to a studio and get yourself a job.

"I feel very blessed to be working here, it's really loose, we have a good time, but we also make sure we communicate with each other, let each other know what's going on, what needs to be fixed, what we can do better, and what steps we need to take to put out the best product we can."

And with Todd Nauck in their ranks, Extreme's best has just gotten better.



J. SCOTT CAMPBELL

TALKING ABOUT HIS GENERATION



Though a relative newcomer to the industry, J. Scott Campbell has garnered quite a large amount of attention through his work on the *Gen 13* series. Campbell managed to come onboard at Wildstorm Studios through interesting means. "About a year and a half ago," Campbell tells, "Jim Lee had this talent search advertisement in the back of his second issue of *WildC.A.T.s*, where he was asking for pencilers, inkers, etc. At the time I was attempting to break into comics anyway, and I thought, wow, here is practically an engraved invitation to work at Homage Studios. So I sent in some samples about three weeks later, and Jim Lee called me up personally—within like a week of receiving them. I blew my mind when he called me up. He just basically said, "Hey, I like your stuff. Do you want to come down to San Diego and draw comics?" So that's pretty much the extent of my origin in comics. Originally I was set up in Colorado around the Denver area, and I'd done commercial art for about a year, kind of struggled to make ends meet with that, and it wasn't too rewarding for me. Comics have certainly been a lot more interesting, to say the least."

From there, Campbell traveled to Wildstorm Studios, where they started him working on pinup work. "I think the first story I did was in *Stormwatch* #0. I did about half that book, and I'd like to forget doing it. It was a chance to get the kinks out and see what was capable or not capable of doing (basically). I doubt I would have been able to advance my work at the rate I have been here if I were, say, working out of my home by myself. It's just a tremendous atmosphere to work in.

Through its successful debut, the *Gen 13* miniseries has since graduated into a regular series, and will return around the end of the year. When the title resumes, Campbell will continue his co-plotting chores on the book, as well. "I'm co-plotting, and creating some of the characters that are going to appear," Campbell says. "Jim's given me a lot of input as far as actual story and personality development of the characters. I'm going to get to change some of the costumes a little bit for the regular series, so I'm getting a lot of input as far as that's concerned. I don't want to reveal too much (about the series) yet. It's kind of tricky. We don't want to have a total departure of what we did in the miniseries, because it proved very successful—but since the first issue I did, I always had this in my mind what I wanted to do with the characters, which is more of a whimsical, less cynical way of looking at comics. I wanted to be a little more fun than other comics. They'll be fighting more like Fantastic Four-esque type characters. Big monsters. And they'll go on weird adventures, kind of like Indiana Jones. They'll just be a little more lighthearted than some of the other comics out there.

"I look around the studio, and I see what books are already being done. And I talked to Jim and said, we don't have a book like this that does comical type stuff. You know, more fantastical oriented stuff instead of big guys with guns shooting each other up. Which isn't bad, I just don't want to repeat what's already done. So you'll just see a little bit more of a departure from what comic books have turned into in the last few years. I'm just trying to get to the way comics were in the Golden Age. It will feel a little bit more like a comic book if I'm successful. We'll see."

And then shortly afterward Jim had several projects he had been looking to turn into "satellite books," Stormwatch and WildC.A.T.s. One of the concepts he had at the time was called *Gen X*, and it was very appealing to me—these teenagers with powers kind of bumbling their ways through these weird adventures. So I asked him if that was a project I could do. Shortly after, I started up on *Gen X* (which was later changed to *Gen 13*), started that almost a year ago, and I'm actually caught on pretty nicely, so I'm very pleased with that.

Campbell's thoroughly enjoyed his time at Wildstorm Studios, and been able to thrive in the atmosphere. "I like it tremendously. I've drawn by myself for as long as I can remember, and since I've come here I've really enjoyed working with people who share the same interest as me. It's also really inspiring to look around the studio at all the great work everyone is doing. It makes you want to do well yourself and pursue getting better. So I can't complain about it. I thoroughly enjoy being here. And since I've been here, Jim has actually personally taken time out to show me tricks, and little things that improve your artwork





ANDY MANGELS:

THE ROY THOMAS OF IMAGE, OR NOT?

by **Joe Fielder with John Benton**

Though Andy Mangels is a name most *HERO ILLUSTRATED* readers first associate with his monthly column "Tollywood Heroes," he's also worked on quite a few comics throughout the years. Mangels' writing has appeared in such varied titles as *Annie Sprinkle is Miss Timed, Quest Blood of Ten Chiefs, The Friday the 13th Jason Goes to Hell Movie Adaptation,* and *Gay Comics* of which he is the current editor. Starting in the month of October comes Mangels' first work for Image Comics, *Badrock & Company.*

Badrock & Company are sets of six-issue miniseries." Mangels explains. "I'm writing issues #2, #3, and possibly #4 of series one. (Image) will be pushing the first six-issue series, then they'll take a couple months off, and come back with another six-issue limited series. *Badrock & Company* #2 is a story called Collecting on Impulse. It's Badrock versus Fuji in a pay-per-view wrestling event for charity. The problem is a female villain named Impulse removes their ability to think about their actions, so they're acting on their first impulse. When you're in the middle of a event, whether it's for charity or not, temptations can sometimes flare—



ANDY MANGELS

Larry Marder brings a pas-

HAVE

sion for creators' rights, a

BEANS

world of experience, comic

WILL

Beanworld to Image Comics

TRAVEL

as executive director and all-around nice guy

by Mike Stokes





LARRY MARDER BEAN WORLD

Since its inception, Image Comics has shown the potential to turn the comic book community on its superpowered ear, and the ideals on which the label was founded combined with the talent founding it rejuvenated and redefined superhero comics.

Sometimes it takes more than talent and good intentions to build an empire, however, especially in a kingdom which has been ruled largely by two giants since long before any serious heirs to the throne were even born.

And after a couple of years of getting their engines started, it became apparent that the Image machine needed a little greasing before it could race with the big boys.

Enter Larry Marder with his oil can.

Marder is by no means a rusty old tin-man, but he has joined Image in their journey down the yellow brick road. Since taking the helm as executive director of Image Comics, Marder has begun tuning up the Image image by organizing the activities of the studios which comprise the company by being a manager to get books out on time and a consigliere to keep Image moving forward.

"When you're trying to coordinate the activities of six fully autonomous studios, but trying to have everybody work toward common goals, the most interesting stuff is just keeping everybody on track," Marder says, "New ideas–good ideas, come out of the studios at any given time, and to take a good idea that has merit and sell it to the other studios is what really takes up a large chunk of my time."

And the ideas keep rolling in to Marder, not only from Image's six partners, but from everyone working in the studios.

"For anybody who either breaks out of a studio book or an outside book," Marder says as he explains the process, "the person comes to me with a proposal, and if the Image office thinks the proposal has merit and is a good fit with the ongoing Image books, at that point in time, we take that proposal to the six Image partners and we become the advocate of that proposal. We go in and sell the idea, and we give the arguments as to why we think this book has merit. At that point in time, the Image partners either vote it thumbs up or thumbs down, and we go from there."

Marder and Image seem to be a perfect blend of experience and exuberance, and the creators rights issue that led to Image's creation is a topic near and dear to Larry Marder's heart.

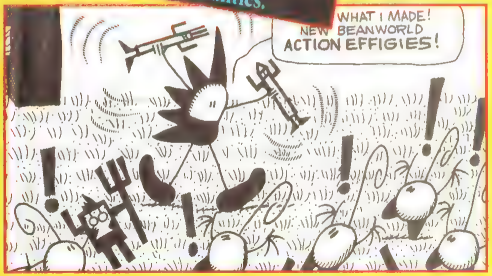
"I'm as radical as you get," he says, "I signed the creators' bill of rights. I was there at the summit conference."

It is this dedication to creators rights that made the Image offer so appealing.

"I felt very strongly at that particular point in time that much of the struggle for creators' rights was taking place in the arena of superhero comics," Marder explains. "I felt then and I feel now that alternative comics like *Bone*, *Starchild*, *Beanworld*, *JammyFox* and these things are doing just fine. But within the realm of superheroes there are a lot of cartoonists that want to grow up and draw superheroes, this is their first love. I felt that the struggle for creators rights was a long and dangerous one, and it has culminated in Image Comics.

"I felt that if Image Comics derailed, [it] would set back creators' rights for at least a generation–that the big companies would put the hammer down and say 'See, they don't know how to handle rights, they don't need rights, we don't need to give





them these rights and royalties, we don't need to grant these economic privileges,' and so, therefore, I felt very strongly that if Image needed my help, it was worth the sacrifice to my own career to keep the creators rights movement alive in this particular arena. I still feel that way; I think that there is a lot at stake here. Every day that Image survives, we get further and further away from the true crisis that I felt last fall. Nonetheless, I think that there's still a lot of work that needs to be done before we can really feel safe and positive that creators' rights are secure for now and forever."

Every day, it seems, more talent is departing the ranks of the big companies to showcase their own creations (or at least to have the opportunity to) in new creator venues such as Malibu's Bravura line and Dark Horse's Legend imprint, but it was the Image founders' mass exodus from the usual routine of corporate comics that blew open the floodgates, leaving the giants with a bad taste in their mouths.

"I think that they're gunning for Image, but I think that their bullets are either blanks or they just miss the target," Marder says. "I think that in many ways, this has turned around now. Some of the brightest young talents that are being discovered today just come directly to Image or they barely set foot at Marvel, and then they move on. It seems that we've reached the point where Image is indeed in the big leagues. What used to be the majors is all of a sudden triple-A ball."

Along with his passion for creators rights and his world of experience, Marder also brings to Image a world of beans.

"I am doing far more work on *Beanworld* while I'm working with Image than I ever did at Moondog's," Marder admits.

For those still unfamiliar with The Beanworld, Marder has described it in the books as "a weird fantasy dimension operating under its own rules and laws. *Beanworld* is about the affinity of life. All the characters, whether they are friends or adversaries, understand that ultimately they depend on each other for survival!"

Most of the Beans are in the Chow Sol'jer Army, led by Mr. Spook, a hero of Beanworld for saving the beans from starvation. The army steals chow (food to the beans and money to the Hoi Polloi) from the Hoi Polloi to keep everyone from the eldest beans to the Pod'l'pool Cuties (baby beans) alive and well



Why beans?

Why not?

Marder says that there are actually two answers to where the beanworld came from.

"There's the actual Bean characters themselves, [which appeared] when I was sort of swept up in the conceptual art movement of the early '70s, where form was less important than the ideas," Marder explains.

"I decided that I wanted to stop drawing people in perspective and worrying about shadows under noses and folds in clothing. I just wanted to do some sort of narrative device that would strip everything down to absolutely one step above stick figures to make it very iconic, so the beans existed before *Beanworld*."

The first appearances of Marder's creation actually appear in the University of Hartford's student newspaper from when Marder was enrolled in the Hartford Art School in the 1970s.

"I used them when I was in college ... to do a weekly strip that was basically a political comic; it was mostly about Nixon and Watergate.

"I felt very strongly that if Image needed my help, it was worth the sacrifice to my own career to keep the creators' rights movement alive in this particular arena."

So the actual first bean comics are well over 20 years old, and there are still some floating around out there–I run into people who have them every once in a while," he says.

"The Beanworld, itself, actually came as I went out into the workday world, and I was working in advertising. I became very interested in mythology, and it just sort of started absorbing different forms of primitive mythology, because primitive mythology, primitive culture is what interested me far more than oriental and occidental mythology to use Joseph Campbell's terms, and it just all started percolating in my head until one day in 1980, after a very bizarre dream, I just got up and started eating *Beanworld* and I've never really looked back."

That dream, however, really didn't have anything to do with *Beanworld*.

"I actually never talk about this dream," Marder says, "but it basically was a message from somebody that I knew who had passed away who was telling me to get on the stick. And for some reason, I just woke up and it all worked."

Marder anticipates his next *Beanworld* will be sprouting at Image soon.

"I'm fairly far into what will probably be a 60-page graphic album which will just be called *The Beanworld* and it's going to tie up a bunch of the loose ends that were left over from *Tales of the Beanworld* at Eclipse," he says.

"It's basically a jumping forward point to where I will start renumbering from #1 a book called *Larry Marder's Beanworld* which will come from Beanworld Press.

The latest saga of the Beanworld takes place several years down the line from the original story.

"Tales of the Beanworld is basically the origin material for the bean culture . . . the stuff that's coming later is much farther forward in the future. The baby beans in *Tales of the Beanworld* at this point, are the adolescents and even young adults, and there will be more baby beans coming, but this 60-page album that I'm working on is material that bridges between the two story arcs."

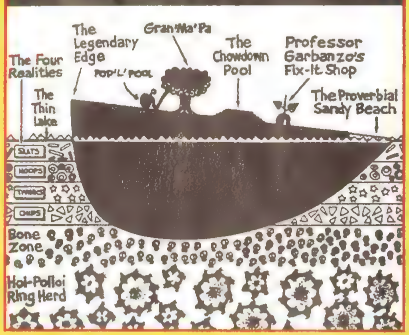
With Mr. Spook and the rest of the beans joining the multitude and growing family of characters in the Image books, could a cross-over be close behind?

You betcha.

"What I've been doing at conventions," Marder says, "is The Beans are Back–it's a Badrock/Beanworld postcard. People want to know if there is going to be a Badrock/Beanworld Team-up, and the answer is absolutely positively, YES. The format that it will appear in, whether it's a one shot, or more likely, a backup story in *Youngblood*, this is something that Rob [Liefeld] and I have been talking about for at least 2 years, and now that I'm out here, it will almost certainly take place next summer," he reveals.

In the meantime, Marder intends to keep Image on course and his Beanworld growing, while artists, old and new, bring their own worlds to Image, where they can also control their own destinies. ▲

Map of the known Beanworld



THE EXTREMES OF THE RISE AND NOT AND TO SUCCESS

STEPHEN PLATT

PROPHET

by Joe Fielder

In a relatively short time, Stephen Platt has become one of the hottest artists in the industry, jumping from from a short stint at Marvel to the penciling chores of Prophet *at Extreme. Platt related to us the story behind his climb to success, as well as the plans for* Prophet.





You've gotten a lot of attention very quickly. How does it feel to be seen as the 'hot' artist in the industry?

I still see myself as having a continuing education, and it's somewhat uncomfortable when you're given that kind of high visibility. If you put out something that you're not proud of, or if you put out something like a learning book or an experiment, that high visibility presents it to a much wider audience. People have expectations of you that I think sometimes are unfair. Sometimes you're just learning how to do something or you've been inspired by a work that you've just been introduced to that influences your work, so people start seeing changes in your work Hopefully the changes aren't going to be so drastic that it alienates people from your work. It's always going to be Steven Platt, but at the same time, as an artist you may want to distance yourself from what you've done before because you may have thought that it was repetitive or redundant. And because of the high visibility, it tends to be noticed much more—and reaction to it tends to be strong. Not that it should be what drives your artistic direction, but it's hard.

It's really wonderful sometimes. It's wonderful to go to the convention and see all of these people saying, "I love your work." For the most part, I would say that the majority of the press about me has been very kind and very flattering and it's been really nice. Whatever happens that's derogatory, it's an opinion, and a lot of people have written that, 'He doesn't deserve the press that he's getting.' And it's fully in their provence to do so. If it happens gradually, I think you're more prepared for it—but it really took me by surprise.

When did you know that you were 'hot'? Was it something that you read, or the lines at the conventions?

For me, and this is only because of my naivete, I started off with a book that was going to be canceled, and the reaction to it was extremely favorable.

I did a few signings where people were being very friendly and really enthusiastic about the book and my career. It started off really small, it was more of an intuitive response to what I was seeing. Then it became very blatant later on with large crowds and huge lineups, and really enthusiastic fans. I'm very thankful for that.

I got lucky, what can I say? It's such a crap shoot with what people like and what they're not going to like. I've seen artists at Marvel who I think are really, really good artists—and yet the reaction to their work isn't as quick or as overwhelming as I thought it would be when people see it. You never know what people are going to like

When I was offered *Cable*, I thought, 'OK, now I'm in the X-office. I've only been in comics three months, I'm in the X-office.' So I was very excited about that. You start to get a sense of your position at Marvel by the books they give you. I was very glad to be part of that X-Men Mutant tradition, and I was really looking forward to it. And then, someone called me. They told me that Rob Liefeld had been trying to get a hold of me for quite some time...

How did you finally get involved with Image?



Rob Liefeld was trying to get a hold of me, and [everyone] thought I lived in England. They were calling all over England.

Finally I [found out and] I gave Rob a call. I felt really good about it and went down [to Image], and it was just a tremendous place to be. I was very excited from the get-go, and I jumped.

I'll confess, I was intimidated by the whole prospect. Excited and intimidated. It's overwhelming. It's like a rookie-of-the-year-type of thing. You come out, you feel like a big college prospect, and everyone's watching you to see how you turn out. So anything less than spectacular is substandard. So *Prophet* #5 was extremely over-rendered. It shouldn't have been, but it was because I felt I had to turn out something that was absolutely spectacular. I was too close to the book, which is a danger with a lot of new guys in comics. So I had to back off and think like a professional, and that just takes time. It's an ongoing education

What part do you have in the making of *Prophet*?

Rob gives me a lot of latitude with regard to where I want to take Prophet psychologically, socially, and characteristically—and introducing new characters, my rendition of characters and the way I choose to represent them. Rob co-plots with me.



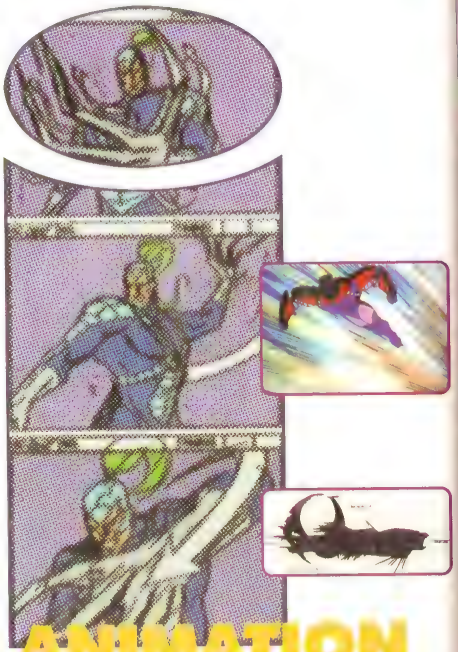
What can we expect to see happen with the character?

He'll start to have flashbacks, and begin to realize that his past is a lot more eventful than he had previously thought When we do that we start to add dimension. Piece by piece we start to uncover his past. And he's also embarking on a spiritual exodus, he's going to undergo a spiritual crisis. He may give up on God, and that happens to the most religious of people and then he may find Him again. I have a lot of Christians coming up to me saying they really love the way Prophet is religious, but how could he have done this in #5? Because that's when I came onboard and I tried to present a whole new vision. And I say, 'Well, he's not a saint he's a Christian ' The things he's done he did them under duress and may have been misled And I think being misled and being found again is part of an exodus that Prophet is undertaking, and I really believe that's going to be healthy for the character. I think this can be something quite deep or a good character story. While he's moving through his adventures, he's questioning why he believes it or why shouldn't he believe it It's a philosophical metamorphosis in a lot of ways

I just want to bring some depth and add some new dimensions to Prophet while he's going through all of these adventures I think Prophet has a dark side, that I think terrifies him but at the same time, may save his life. I think accepting that you're not perfect or that you're not a saint, can be a lot more helpful than trying to be a saint when you know full well that you can never be one—because that's for saints. I think the duplicity is healthy, and I think it's going to be healthy for us and for our readers too. Obviously you can't put Tolstoy in a comic book in 12 issues. But I think that you can at some point create an intelligent arena to discuss an issue. I think people underestimate kids. I think we can present a complex issue, and I think we can make it entertaining ▲



ROB LIEFELD ON THE YOUNG BLOOD SERIES



by Joe Fielder

What's the story with the *Youngblood Animated Series*?

I will tell you! I saved it from the conservative broadcast system! And walked out of that network feeling really good. That day I was sitting in the office of CBS and they're talking to me and I was going, "Oh my gosh, I've been played all along. All the time I thought I was in control but they were breaking my nature the entire time." They were breaking me down. I was becoming *Hollywood-ized*. I said, "Heck if I'm going to sanitize my stuff for this." I just got a bad feeling about it. I'd gone in there with an idea that I'd had as a wraparound for the cartoon—to use live-action Badrock, because we have this incredible costume that we had made. The special effects guy had some great ideas of how to pull this off with an animatronic face, and they didn't respond to it at all. And I'm like, 'I felt very strongly about that and some other stuff." I remember walking out the door going, "I'm going to call my agent and I'm going to pull out of this right now. And I am going to sleep better tonight and not have the anxiety I've had."

ANIMATION

YOUNGBLOOD

WILDC.A.T.s





WILDC.A.T.S JOINS THE SATURDAY MORNING CARTOON CROWD

Starting September 17, Jim Lee's *WildC.A.T.s: Covert Action Teams* will reach a whole new audience with an animated series on CBS TV. CBS has committed to 13 episodes, a full season's worth of WildC.A.T.s.

Fans of [illegible] already familiar with [illegible] adventures of Jacob Marlowe and his band of WildC.A.T.s, and are used to waiting a month to get [illegible]ment. In the new half-hour animated series, produced by Nelvana Ltd., the adventures of the WildC.A.T.s will air every Saturday morning at 10:00 am. Team members Spartan, Void, Maul, WarBlade, Zealot, Grifter, and Voodoo are all part of the excitement.

"I'm delighted to have the WildC.A.T.s in the capable hands of the people at Nelvana," creator Jim Lee says. "They and CBS have been very careful to involve me every step of the way. Quite frankly, I'm amazed at the amount of creative control I've been given. They let me veto things. [illegible] they run every [illegible] past me before it goes into production."

Jeff Mariotte, Wildstorm Productions marketing director, said that the series will remain very true to the comic books. "There will be plenty of action in every episode," he said. "All the characters our fans have become accustomed to are in the [illegible]. They haven't really changed anything, beyond toning down a little of the violence you sometimes see in the comic books. We've heard bad thing about animation companies and network shows always changing entire concepts and are delighted that it is not happening to the *WildC.A.T.s*. CBS and Nelvana have both been very supportive of our original vision and have been great about keeping us involved."

After some [illegible] waiting to hear who [illegible] by CBS, and he was not. Lee feels very fortunate to have made the final cut. "We were the dark horse," he said. "We came into the whole thing late.

"When I got the call that we had been picked up, I was ecstatic. It was an amazing feeling, and I smiled constantly for the next two days.

And so the phone call was made. My agent was sitting there like 'Rob, you understand everyone waits by their phone for the pick-up? All they want all season long is that pick-up. That. "You're in!" . . . And you're not going to wait?' He said, "You're sure you want to do this?" I said, "I'm sure." We took it off the market, and a week later I dissolved my partnership with these animators that I'd met. And the reason I was able to pull out of CBS like I did was because I didn't let them in at all on the development process. Had they even spent one dime it would've been partly theirs. So I was able to walk away because I had kept my nose clean.



Well, fast forward to just about two months ago, Fox had contacted me and said, "We'd like to take a look at this." I went into meetings with people at Fox and showed them what I had. They liked Youngblood because they felt it wasn't imitative of anything else that was on the air, they liked the take on the characters and they liked the humorous aspect of the book. With Fox, I feel they have a totally different sensibility. They're so much more from the hip, and they always have been.



And they know that's the reason why they're successful. Fox to me is more reflective of Image Comics, and the other networks to me seem like I was back at Marvel. You make certain sacrifices down the line whenever you go into any partnerships and definitely an animated series is a partnership with whatever company or whatever network. But at least I have the right to choose what partnerships I'm going to be in, and I feel good at Fox and that's where it's going to be right now. They're very enthusiastic about it because X-Men runs out next year. Batman has already run out. They've been very successful with superhero comics and licenses and they'll be losing two major players, they'll have *Spider-Man* still, but they've expressed interest in *Youngblood*. It feels like a more intelligent marriage. I can't believe I was in CBS talking to this old lady who runs the place—I mean she's as old as my grandma. There's this 60-year-old lady running the children's network. *It's like my grandma editing my comic books*. You, at some point, go, "There's something wrong with this." At Fox, there's all these young people. And the clip that I keep showing at the conventions is indicative of exactly how it's going to look.

One thing I left out, the guy who owned the overseas studio flew out here and said, "We were ready to go. We had a crew set up to do *Youngblood*." He said, "We still want to do *Youngblood*." They have been brought on board to do the *WildC.A.T.s* series. And when they told me that I knew *WildC.A.T.s* was going to look awesome.

"I'm an eternal optimist. *Youngblood* will work out whether it's on Fox, which feels better, or I have two toy companies who've said, "We'd like to go direct to video." I'm still pursuing that at the same time.

The bonus is if it actually gets on the air. The one thing that's great about the opportunities that we've had, [with all the animation or movie deals] that's not our livelihood. We get to come home and we get to draw funnybooks, and we get a big kick out of drawing funnybooks. That's where my head's at. We're not like screenwriters or actors where we rely on their treatment of us, and it's like—at the end of the day, if this movie doesn't get made and this cartoon doesn't get on, *I've still got my job*. My job is comics, so that's all bonus. That's all perks.





IMAGE HITS THE STREETS. MERCHANDISING

THE SPAWN EXPLOSION

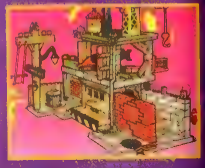
Image's biggest title has an extensive list of merchandising tie-ins coming, the biggest of which is the 'Spawn' Simmons Spawntastic Apparel line of jackets, hats, and other clothing. That should be available in time for Christmas. There will be a Spawn version for the PS-X. There is also talk with Santa Cruz about making Spawn skateboards.

The biggest doses of Spawn will be coming in the form of toys. Todd McFarlane started up Todd Toy in January and the company is taking off. The first line consists of six fully articulated action figures: Spawn, Clown, Overkill, Medieval Spawn, Violator, and Tremor (currently called Biuda as a pinup in issue #8). Each figure has a special action feature from Overkill's pop-[illegible] to the Clown.

Later this fall, there will be vehicles released including a duplicate of the Spawnmobile with pop-up gun turrets and a back spoiler which flips up and slings a skull. The second series of the Spawn line will be released in the Rig. Early 1995 will see the release of the Spawn Alley playset along with two more unrevealed toy lines planned for 1995.









MAXX-IMUM SOUND

Cutting-edge character, The Maxx, stars in the first-ever digital recordings of a comic book, supervised and approved by his creator, Sam Kieth. The tape version carries issues #1-3 of *The Maxx* with full sound effects, cast, and original music score. Planned for the future is the Maxximum Sound CD collecting *The Maxx* issues #1-8, *The Maxx* 1/2 and *Darker Image*.

WILDSTORM'S PLAYMATES

Wildstorm has announced that in December, Playmates will be releasing seven toys to coincide with the *WildC.A.T.s* animated TV show. Toy fans should be familiar with Playmates for their *TMNT* toys and *Star Trek* figures. Posters, T-shirts, and portfolios featuring Wildstorm titles *Gen 13*, *Deathblow*, and *WildC.A.T.s* will also be hitting store shelves soon.

ETCH IT IN STONE...

Along with skateboards, watches, and gear, Dale Keown's Pitt is now featured in one of the coolest limited edition sculptures to date.



BACK-CRACKING FUN FROM SHADOWLINE!

As Shadowhawk skateboards tear up the pavement, Jim Valentino's chiropractic nightmare will also be seen and heard in the form of attached to each figure of [illegible]





TOP COW CYBERSTUFF

[illegible] The pre-[illegible] As if that weren't enough, [illegible] include a limited [illegible] original [illegible] and a [illegible] Rig [illegible] eyes on the [illegible] whose [illegible] remember. You may remember Mr. Moore from his rendition of Erik Larsen's Savage Dragon and Lobo's run on Pitt. Plans are to do the entire Cyberforce team. Top Cow also offers T-shirts, caps, and beanies that you can pick up at all of the major conventions across the country.

What else? Cyberforce skateboards, a set of Topps Cyberforce trading Cards this fall featuring art from many of the industry's top talents, and also in the works are video games, [illegible] film.



QUALITY OVER LOGIC:

Proud Papa and 'Weenie Artist' Rob Liefeld calls the shots where his Youngblood babies are concerned.

Rob Liefeld has never been one to roll over and do as he's told, especially when it comes to compromising [illegible]. As his creations become household names, more and more outside [illegible] are being exposed to his extreme philosophy, and in many [illegible] often looked for, taken for granted, and like his other endeavors, refuses to [illegible] Youngblood action figures that can be made

"I've learned the practice is: it's the guy with the most money that you give the [illegible] to," he's disgusted. "Whoever coughs me up the most bucks, and the biggest up front cash gets to make my ... toy.' *Screw* the [illegible] can't [illegible] do it.

"I'm not [illegible] the creativity," Liefeld continues, "and we're like, weenie artist. We're [illegible] we're going to make the toy please.' And they look at us like, 'Huh?' 'No! We're going to give you a percentage and we're [illegible] a piece of action money, and that'll make you happy!' Umm, no. We have to see how you're going to make the toy.' I had a Shaft, a Diehard, and a Prophet that [illegible] imagine what [illegible] done. I was like, 'This is cool! Thank [illegible] look at [me] like, 'You're looney.' [S]ome of these toy companies [illegible] so stupid that we're not honored that they're coming to us."

Because Liefeld was about to ink a deal for Youngblood toys, a clash of philosophy looked [illegible]. "I was *this close* ... dotted line, Liefeld explains, and then they went, 'Well hey and this, we would like all your characters and all your ideas for the next 4 years.' I [said], 'Ohhh, *that* wasn't mentioned in the first meeting. Or the tenth. Or the 20th.' So my lawyers went. 'Screw you. We're out of this.' They think they [illegible] and nowadays. "'Oh, we'd also like the rights to your first-born child.' And you go, 'You can't have that first-born kid.' So we're weenies, because [illegible] things. I mean, Youngblood are my babies. Nobody ... CBS is not [illegible] some mainly pansy-ass son of my babies and embarrass them, because I am going to be embarrassed for them and that's going to suck.

Needless to say, when [illegible] related to Liefeld's concerns then stepped in with an offer to make Youngblood toys. "Todd [McFarlane] played me very correctly, in that he sent me a couple of Spawn toys. I [still] say, 'This package arrived one day and I opened it and [there's] the Kabuki medieval, Spawn and The Violator. I called him up in a panic," he says. "I was like, 'Todd! Uh uh-son ethnic got sent here by accident. I assume these are going to the toy people.' And I was like, 'I want to get these out in the mail today. I mean somebody must have labeled this [illegible]. Will they get it?' 'No! That's for you to hold onto for a few weeks.' Now, I'm like, 'Oh, that's an ulterior motive going on here.' I go, 'Why is that?' And he goes, 'Well I just [illegible] Image and we don't [illegible]. So I can't [illegible] me I ... I've never been sent it.' And he says, 'Yeah I could make your toys [illegible].'

"Within [illegible] quick deal, [after] the phone room [illegible]," he says. "We [illegible] to [illegible] the next toy companies [illegible] like, 'Oh [illegible] forget a company? I've got a company.' I mean for a while there I was going to do the *Spawn* cartoon, and he was going to do the *Youngblood* toys.

Todd's going to come out with killer toys that look better than [illegible] and [kids will] pick up that Badrock and go, 'This should be a 10-dollar toy. [They're] psycho making this four dollars.' He says, and the toy companies don't understand that. They're sitting there scratchin' going, 'This doesn't work in the books! This doesn't [illegible]' But Todd knows what it takes to get out here and make noise

"That's a limited license, but the upside is, if I'm a partner in the Youngblood toys and I go make a movie, I can go make my own toys," he says. "Think about if Kevin [Eastman] and Peter [Laird] went out and made their own toys. They'd be like Rupert Murdoch and Ron Perelman combined. They'd own several countries ... It's fun to be involved. It's all about fun. I mean there's no logic where we come in. Like I said, it's just weenie artist S[illegible] it's just a fun process."

LIMITED TIME OFFER! ACT NOW!

SUBSCRIBE TO EGM

AND RECEIVE 12 INCREDIBLE ISSUES & Q-LETTER!



Each big full-color issue of EGM is packed with In-Your-Face information and exclusive coverage of the hottest video game action you can find.

EGM is the only mag loaded with special pull-out strategy guides, killer maps and super secrets that will send your scores soaring!

You find all this and more only in the Biggest and Best video game magazine! Be the first to get every action-packed page delivered to your door by subscribing today!

VALUABLE INFO FOR VIDEO GAME INSIDERS!

SPECIAL QUARTERMANN CHEAT SHEETS FREE!!

Now you can learn more about the video game industry than ever before with a subscription to EGM! Bound-in with your special copy of EGM you'll find an incredible game cheats from the guru of gossip - Quartermann - at no additional charge! As a subscriber you'll have access to information so provocative it can't even get into EGM! Only Quartermann can deliver this kind of info. Don't miss out!

SAVE LIKE A PRO! SUBSCRIBE TO EGM!

BECOME A VIDEO GAME V.I.P. & GET 12 ISSUES OF EGM & Q-LETTER!

Get 12 issues of EGM plus Cheat Sheets for the special reduced price of $28.95!
Send payment to: EGM, P.O. Box 7524, Red Oak, IA 51591-0524

12 Issues Only $28.95!



Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ ZIP _____
_____ Payment Enclosed _____ Bill Me
Credit Card Orders:
_____ VISA _____ MC
Card No. _____
Exp. Date _____
Signature _____

For Faster Service, Call Toll-Free:
1-800-444-2884

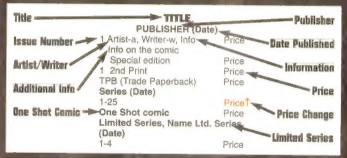
Make check or money order payable to Sendai Publishing Group, Inc. Canada and Mexico add $10.00. All foreign subscriptions via air mail only $100.00. Any/all checks or money orders must be payable in U.S. funds, and must be drawn on an American bank. (American Express money order, Citibank money order, or any other type of check or money order that would go through a U.S. branch bank.) All foreign orders must be prepaid. Please allow 6-8 weeks for your first issue.

HHSJ1

HERO PRICE GUIDE

HERO PRICE GUIDE FOCUS
IMAGE #0





The *HERO PRICE GUIDE* you now hold in your hands is the most interactive and accurate price listing of its kind. Hundreds of hours were spent gathering and compiling the extensive data contained within the following 46 pages to deliver a price guide that addresses the needs and concerns of both casual and avid collectors alike.

Nearly 100 different retail locations were polled to obtain the pricing information contained within the *HERO* guide. The single price you see listed in the *HERO PRICE GUIDE* is meant to serve as an average medium between the highest and lowest prices we've received from participating retailers. Since *HERO* does not operate, own, or have an interest in any type of comic retail business, the *HERO PRICE GUIDE* is a more accurate reflection of current comic values.

Even though time and effort has gone into making the *HERO PRICE GUIDE* the most comprehensive and informative value listing, please understand that day-to-day changes as well as geographical considerations may slightly alter the value of the comic in your area. Some stores may charge more or less than the prices listed within this guide, although the data in *HERO* will provide additional information relating to trends and value, levels that provide you with your collection's approximate value, as well as the month-to-month direction that certain titles are heading.

If you're a retailer and would like to be a contributor to the *HERO PRICE GUIDE*, contact Brian Wenberg, *HERO*, 1920 Highland Ave., #222, Lombard, IL 60148.

TITLE
The name of the comic book.

FACT FILE
Information about the comic including publisher, writer and artist team, cover price, and current value.

OVERVIEW
A background of the story line featured in that comic.

DEALER PICK
What retailers say about this title's demand, interest, and long-term value power.

HERO PICK
What does the *HERO* research staff think of this comic's potential?

HERO CONTEST
Now everyone has the chance to win something!

HERO RATING
This is the long-range potential of the comic in question, based on info from retailers.

Publisher:	Image
Issue No.:	#0
Writer:	Various
Artist:	Various
Inker:	Various
Cover Price:	Free
Current Price:	$30.00

OVERVIEW:
Short stories from the Image founders that will not be reprinted again in this form. It features the first appearance of Troll, Stryker's origin, a Dragon story, a Shadowhawk story, and more.

DEALER PICK:
"People try to sell it to me more than I sell to them ... Too busy selling entertaining comic books to readers to worry about coupon-type books. Consumers beware. I gave mine to a really good customer who loves Image stuff. Don't bet the farm on this 'collectible.' It would've been nice to see a Spawn story instead of just preview pages of new characters."

H.I. PICK:
People waited a long time for this book, and were fairly disappointed when it finally came. Featuring some interesting work, but on the whole was not as strong as it could have been.

HERO CONTEST #229
Send on a postcard the names of all six Image founders. Six winners will be chosen at random.

Send to:
Hero Contest #229
1920 Highland Ave.
Lombard, IL 60148

HERO RATING:
★★

HERO PRICE GUIDE FOCUS

IMAGE #0



Publisher:	Image
Issue No.:	#0
Writer:	Various
Artist:	Various
Inker:	Various
Cover Price:	Free
Current Price:	$30.00

OVERVIEW:

Short stories from the Image founders that will not be reprinted again in this form. It features the first appearance of Troll, Stryker's origin, a Dragon story, a Shadowhawk story, and more

DEALER PICK:

"People try to sell it to me more than I sell to them. ... Too busy selling entertaining comic books to readers to worry about coupon-type books. Consumers beware. I gave mine to a really good customer who loves Image stuff. Don't bet the farm on this 'collectible' ... it would've been nice to see a Spawn story instead of just preview pages of new characters."

H.I. PICK:

People waited a long time for this book, and were fairly disappointed when it finally came. Featuring some interesting work, but on the whole was not as strong as it could have been.

HERO CONTEST #229

Send on a postcard the names of all six Image founders. Six winners will be chosen at random.

Send to:
Hero Contest #229
1920 Highland Ave.
Lombard, IL 60148

HERO RATING:

★★

TITLE
PUBLISHER (Date)
1 Artist-a, Writer-w, Info on comic
Info on the comic
1 Special edition
1 2nd Print
TPB (Trade Paperback)
New Series (Date)
1-25
One shot comic
Limited Series, Name of Ltd. Series (Date)
1-4

1963
Image (1993-1994)

1 S.Bissette-a,A.Moore-w	2.00
Mystery Inc.	
1 Gold ed.	22.50
1 Platinum	22.50
2 S.Bissette-a,R.Vletch-w	1.50
The Fury	
3 S.Bissette-a,R.Vletch-w	1.50
Tales of the Uncanny	
4 S.Bissette-a,J.Valentino-w	1.50
Tales from Beyond	
5 S.Bissette-a,J.Valentino-w	1.50
Horus Lord of Light	



ART OF HOMAGE STUDIOS
Image (1993)

1	4.95

BLACK FLAG
Image (1993-Present)

Preview	1.95

BLOODSTRIKE
Image (1993-Present)

1	3.50
2-10	1.95

BOOF
Image (1993-Present)

1	1.95

BRIGADE
Image (1993-Present)

0	1.50
1 R.Liefeld-w	5.00
1 Gold ed.	47.50
2	4.75
3	2.75
4	2.50
5	2.25
6-10	1.95
25	1.95
Images of Tomorrow story line, shipped 15 months early between issue 9 and 10	
Limited Series	
1-4	4.00

CODENAME STRIKEFORCE
Image (1994-Present)

1-4 B.Peterson-a,M.Silvestri-w	1.95

CYBERFORCE
Image (1992-1993)

0	2.25
1 M.Silvestri-a/w	9.50
2	3.50
3-4	2.50
TPB	12.95
2nd Series (1993-Present)	
1-4	1.95
1 Gold ed.	18.75†
2 Silver ed.	20.00
3 Gold ed.	20.00

DARKER IMAGE
Image (1993-Present)

1 R.Liefeld, Jim Lee & S.Kieth-a	2.50
1 Silver foil logo ed, B&W cover and insides	25.00
1 Gold ed.	28.75

DEATHBLOW
Image (1993-Present)

1-5 Jim Lee-a/w	1.75

DEATHMATE
Image/Valiant (1993-Present)

Prelude	3.25
Prelude Gold Ed.	32.50
Black Jim Lee-a 1st App. Gen X; Burn-Out, Fairchild, Freefall, and Grung	6.25†
Black Gold Ed.	17.50
Blue	5.25
Blue Gold Ed.	32.50
Epilogue	3.25
Red	8.50†
Red Gold Ed.	13.50
Tour Book	5.25
Yellow B.Chang-a	32.50
Yellow Gold Ed.	

EXTREME TOUR BOOK
Image (1992)

Tour Ed.	3.50
Coupon expired	
Gold ed.	27.50
Gold/Signed ed.	42.50
Sandaway	12.50



FREAK FORCE
Image (1993-Present)

1	2.25
2-7	1.95

GEN 13
Image (1994)

1	9.50†
2	6.25†
3	3.50†
4	1.95

HOMAGE STUDIOS SWIMSUIT
Image (1993)

1	1.50



San Diego Special 20.00

IMAGE ZERO
Image (1993)

0 Special coupon giveaway	30.00

IMAGES OF SHADOWHAWK
Image (1993-Present)

1-3 K.Giffen-a/w,A.Grant-w	1.95

KINDRED
Image (1994-Present)

1	2.75†
2-3	2.50

MAXX, THE
Image (1993-Present)

1/2 Special mail offer	7.50
1 S.Kieth-a/w	5.00
1 Glow in dark cover ed.	25.00
2	2.75
3-6	2.25
7-9	1.95

MEGATON
Megaton Pub. (1983-1987)

1 Vanguard App.	10.25†
2 Cameo App. Savage Dragon	17.50
3 1st App. Savage Dragon	23.50
4 Savage Dragon App.	15.00
5	3.50
6-8	2.00

NEWMEN
Image (1994-Present)

1-2	2.25†
3-4	1.95

PACT
Image (1994-Present)

1-3	1.95

PHANTOM FORCE
Genesis West (1993-Present)

0	2.50
1-2 Published by Image	2.50
3	2.50

PITT
Image (1993-Present)

1 D.Keown-a	7.50
2	3.75†
3	3.00†
4-5	1.95

PROPHET
Image (1993-Present)

1	3.25
1 Variation cover by S.Platt	20.00
2	3.00
3	1.95
4 S.Platt-a cover	2.75
4A	20.00
5-6	1.95



SAVAGE DRAGON
Image (1992)

1 E.Larsen-a/w	8.50
1st App. Super Patriot	
2	5.75
3	3.50
2nd Series (1993-Present)	
1	3.50
2	2.95
2-10	1.95
Savage Dragon Vs. The Savage Megaton Man	3.00
Savage Dragon Vs. The Savage Megaton Man	20.00 Gold ed.

SHADOWHAWK
Image (1992-1993)

1	11.00
1 Embossed with silver foil	17.50
2	4.25
3	3.00
4	2.25
Volume 2 (1993)	
1	4.50
2	2.50
2 Gold ed.	35.00
2 Gold/Signed ed.	57.50
3	3.25
TPB Secret Revealed	12.95
Volume 3 (1993-Present)	
1-4	1.95
1 Gold ed.	90.00
Showcase Sealer special	
Shadowhawk Gallery	1.95

SHAMAN'S TEARS
Image (1993-Present)

1-2 M.Greil-a/w	2.75

SPAWN
Image (1992-Present)

1 T.McFarlane-a/w	11.75†
1st App. Spawn	
2 1st App. Violator	11.00
3	10.00
4	15.00
Comes with coupon for Image 0 comic	
5	7.75
6	5.25
7	5.75
8 A.Moore-w	3.00
9 N.Gaiman-w	3.00
10 D.Sim-w, Cerebus App.	3.50
11 F.Miller-w	3.25
12 T.McFarlane-w	3.00
13-14	2.25
15-17	2.50
18	1.95
21-22	1.95
19 and 20 skipped	
Capital TPB	157.50
Reprints 1-3, signed by McFarlane	
Spawn/Batman	3.95

STORMWATCH
Image (1993-Present)

0	2.50
1-3	2.50
1 Gold ed.	45.00
4-9	1.95
25	2.50
Images of Tomorrow story line, appearing 15 months early, shipped between issues 9 and 10	
Special	2.50
Sourcebook	2.50

SUPERPATRIOT
Image (1993-Present)

1 E.Larsen-w	2.75
2-3	1.95

SUPREME
Image (1992-Present)

1 R.Liefeld-w	4.00
1 Gold ed.	47.50
2	2.00
3-13	1.95
14	2.50

TEAM YOUNGBLOOD
Image (1993-Present)

1-8	1.95

TRIBE
Axis Comics (1993-Present)

1 L.Stroman-a	3.75
1 Ivory/Gold ed. Published by Image	27.50
2	1.95
3	2.50

TROLL
Image (1993-Present)

1 J.Matsuda-a,R.Liefeld-w	2.50

UNION
Image (1993-Present)

1 M.Texiera-a	2.75
2-4	1.95

VANGUARD
Image (1993-Present)

1-6	1.95

VIOLATOR
Image (1994-Present)

1-2 B.Sears-a,A.Moore-w	1.95

WETWORKS
Image (1994-Present)

1	1.95
1 Gold ed.	45.00
1 Gold ed. signed	87.50†
2	7.00
2 Special ed.	9.00

WILD!C.A.T.S: COVERT ACTION TEAMS
Image (1992-Present)

1 Jim Lee-a/w	6.00
1st App., Grifter, Maul, Spartan, Warblade, Voodoo, Vortex, and Zealot begin	
Preview of Wetworks and card, Prism cover	
3	3.00
4	2.50
4 With card	11.50
5-7	1.95
8-11	2.50
Yearbook	3.50
TPB	9.95
HC signed	50.00

WILD!C.A.T.S TRILOGY
Image (1993-Present)

1 Jae Lee-a	2.75
2-3	1.95





WILDSTAR
Image (1993)

1 J.Ordway-a,A.Gordon-w	3.50
1 Gold ed.	33.50†
2	3.75
3-4	1.95

YOUNGBLOOD
Image (1992-1993)

0	3.50
0 Gold ed.	55.00
1 R.Liefeld-a/w	11.50
1 2nd print	4.00
2	9.00
1st App. Shadowhawk, 1st App. Prophet	
2 Pink logo	9.00
2 2nd print	2.25
3 1st App. Supreme	6.00
4	3.00

YOUNGBLOOD: STRIKEFILE
Image (1993-Present)

1	3.00
1 Gold ed.	40.00
2	2.25
3-4	2.50

COMING SOON TO A HERO ILLUSTRATED NEAR YOU...

Our Cover Feature:
***BONE* HITS THE BIG TIME**
A Compelling Cover From Jeff Smith and a Special Dual Interview

One year after its debut, Jeff Smith's *Bone* has become one of comics' newest—and brightest—success stories. So where does he go from here? Join *HERO*—and special guest interviewer **James Robinson**—as we talk to Jeff about creativity, fame, and what *Bone* and *Starman* have in common. In addition, we'll be talking to some self-publishers who might be next in line for the brass ring, including James Owen, Batton Lash, Shannon Wheeler, John Mitchell, Jana Christy, Terry Moore, and two up-and-comers who call themselves Quesada and Palmiotti...

ANIMATION CONFIDENTIAL!

It seems like every time you turn around, another comic book character is headed for Toontown. Will the next darling of Saturday morning be *The Savage Dragon? The Tick? WildC.A.T.s.? HERO* takes a special look at the comics headed for a small screen—or a big one—near you!

SPOTLIGHT ON: Murphy Anderson

One of comics' unsung heroes reminisces about his days with Hawkman, Adam Strange, and Superman, and how he parlayed artistic skill into production skill with his new career.

HARVEY PEKAR IN ALL HIS SPLENDOR!

For more than 15 years, Harvey Pekar's *American Splendor* has been one of the finest comic books to ever come out of the Veterans' Administration offices. Now, as he prepares to release the autobiographical graphic novel *Our Cancer Year*, Pekar talks to *HERO* about his long battle with cancer, and his even longer battles with David Letterman.

PLUS MUCH, MUCH MORE!

Mark Waid! *Evil Ernie!* Will Eisner! Plus, we'll have all the regular features you've come to know and love in every issue of *HERO*: there's Andy Mangels' *Hollywood Heroes*, Mark Nelson's *From Pencils To Inks*, Don Simpson's *Megaton Man*, and Frank "Block That Kick" Kurtz's *Go Figure!*

DON'T BE LEFT OUT! • RESERVE YOUR COPY NOW!







THE FIRST IMAGE TOYS ARE HERE!

STRYKER™ CYBLADE™

CYBER FORCE™

ACTION FIGURES

RIPCLAW™ IMPACT™

FULLY BENDABLE FIGURES, EACH WITH ITS OWN ORIGINAL CYBERFORCE SPECIAL EDITION COMIC. AND, AS AN ADDED BONUS, EARLY EDITIONS WILL COME WITH AN EXCLUSIVE TRADING CARD OF THE CHARACTER!

TOP COW PRODUCTIONS, INC.

Image

CYBERFORCE, STRYKER, RIPCLAW, IMPACT AND CYBLADE ™ and © 1994, TOP COW PRODUCTIONS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHO'S DRAWING WHAT!

This September, the Founding Fathers of Image Comics are going to do something very unusual—it's a highly classified, Top Secret procedure code-named IMAGE X MONTH.

They won't tell anyone precisely what they're doing, but Image Fans be advised: Don't be surprised if Todd McFarlane doesn't create Spawn, Erik Larsen doesn't create the Savage Dragon, Jim Lee doesn't create WildC.A.T.s, Rob Liefeld doesn't create Youngblood, Marc Silvestri doesn't create Cyberforce, Jim Valentino doesn't create ShadowHawk.

But rest assured, all six issues will be published and all will be written and drawn by the Image Founding Fathers.

Be we can't tell you who will be creating which book.

You'll just have to go to your favorite comic shop every week to discover the answer to "Who Dunnit?!" Is this for real? Is it a hoax or a dream? No way! It's IMAGE X MONTH and we're just having fun...and that's what comics are all about!

IMAGE X MONTH.

WHEN ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN HYPE!